Vincent Alsop.

an Original Painting in Dr. Williams's Library.

Published by Button & Son, Paternoster Row.

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THE Mischief of Impositions: OR, AN ANTIDOTE Against a Late DISCOURSE, Partly Preached At *Guild-Hall* Chappel, *May* 2. 1680. CALLED, *The Mischief of SEPARATION.*

o (Vincent Alsop)

If your Church had kept to the Primitive Simplicity and Moderation, the occasions of most Controversies had been taken away. Dr. *Edw. Stillingfleet's* Rational Account, *p.* 102.

I will not conceal my mind! In things purely Indifferent, Multiformity joyn'd with Charity, *does no less advance the glory of God than* Uniformity. Dr. *Fuller* Def. of Ch. History.

Sacra Scriptura est lex Ecclesiæ, fidei mensura; Regula Intellectûs; Humanæ Ratiocinationis frænum. *An.*

LONDON: Printed for *Benj. Alsop*, at the *Angel* and *Bible* in the *Poultrey*, over against the *Stocks-Market*, 1680.

To the Right Worſhipful Sir T. R. *Knight.*

SIR!

SInce your Command gave occaſion to the *Conception* of this Diſcourſe, juſtice will oblige you to ſtand for its *Godfather*; which you may ſafely do without danger from the *Canon*. The height of my ambition was to provide my ſelf of a *Right Worſhipful* Suſceptor, when Favourites may command the Patronage of the *Right Honourable:* thus every man will anſwer for a *Great mans Error*, when the *poor mans Truth* may go unchriſten'd: for thus the Poet,

> *An* heaven-born-Truth (*like poor mens infants*) may
> *For want of* Godfathers, *unchriſten'd ſtay*,
> *And find no* Prieſt; *when every ſtander-by*,
> *Will be* a Goſſip *to a* Great mans *Lye.*

Among the many diſcouragements I ſtruggled with in anſwering your *deſires* and the *Doctors Sermon*, there was none more terrifying (though many ſo) than that it was a *Sermon*, and a Sermon premunited with the *Lord Mayors Order*. The *former*; becauſe it ſeem'd indecent to Arraign a Diſcourſe, that came with the Certificate of *the God of Heaven*, and had ſo honourably been acquitted by the *Gods on Earth:* To this I had nothing to ſay in my Defence, but that, *He that will plead the priviledg of the ſanctuary, muſt keep within the verge of it.* I have heard of a Gentleman, that being long proſecuted in the *high Commiſſion* for ſtriking a *Reverend Clergy-man*, pleaded that *Mr. Parſon* was not in his *Canonical Habiliments*, and therefore ought not to inſiſt upon his character; and *Archbiſhop Laud* voted for the poor

mans diſcharge, becauſe it was but *Lay-battery* to cudgel *a Coat*; which would have been *Theomachy* upon a *Caſſock:* I muſt borrow the ſame Plea; That the *Reverend Doctor* ought not to ſtand upon the priviledg of a Preacher, unleſs he had kept cloſer to his Commiſſion, and preacht *nothing for*, but what *really was* the *Word of God:* But to be open with you, Sir, It was the latter that put me hardeſt to it, when I ſaw the flag of *London* ſtreaming before the Ship; for I proteſt to you, I am always ready to ſtrike ſail to the meaneſt *Yatch* that hangs out the Colours of ſo ſacred *a Name*, ſo great *an Authority:* And yet I rub'd through that, by conſidering, that the *Order* was for *its Printing*, not againſt *my Anſwering*; and though that *Licenſe* made it more *vendible*, yet not at all more *unanſwerable*; and ſo I hope we are paſt the worſt, for I never much Dread thoſe Polemical pieces, whoſe greateſt ſtrength lies in *the left-hand Page before the Title.* And yet I was a little ſtumbled at the *Order*, which deſires the Doctor *to Print*, not only *what he had preached, but what further he had prepared to deliver at that time*; which (me-thought) lookt ſomewhat like the Implicit faith required by the *Rubrick*, which enjoyns the Miniſter to *uſe one of the Homilies* ſet forth, *or hereafter* to be ſet forth *by Common Authority.*

In the very entrance of his *Epiſtle Dedicatory*, the Doctor takes notice of *a Report raiſed*, it ſeems, *by ſome ill men* (that's the Alamode phraſe) *that he intended to ſtir up the Magiſtrates and Judges to a perſecution of Diſſenters.* I was not a little troubled, that a perſon of his Character ſhould be ſo unworthily miſrepreſented, and miſinterpreted; and no leſs joyful, that the Doctor has ſo timely and zealouſly diſclaimed a deſign ſo horrid in it ſelf, ſo unbecoming the Place he then bore, and the Title he juſtly wears; nor can I imagine whence a ſuſpicion, as *ſcandalous* as *groundleſs*, could be foſter'd, except from this one thing, That his Sermon was preach't to thoſe *Righteous perſons*, *who* (in the matter of Conformity) *needed no repentance*, when the Harangue had been more pertinent and proper for a Conventicle, to thoſe *Sinners* whom he preſumes to need it.

But

But ſo far was he from blowing up the coals of perſecution, that he profeſſes *his only deſign was to prevent all occaſion of it, by finding out a certain foundation for a laſting union among our ſelves.* And not without good reaſon: for ſeeing there are but *two ways* to extinguiſh a raging fire, *the one* by pouring water upon that mercileſs Element, *the other* by withdrawing the fewel that *feeds*, but never *fills* its inſatiable appetite; the Dr. judg'd it the wiſer courſe to convert all the Diſſenters, that there might be nothing to burn; rather than leaving ſuch combubiſtle matter to quench the fiery fury of perſecution: for if there were no offenders, there would neither be room for *pardoning mercy*, nor *vindicative juſtice*; and if he could perſwade all men to conform upon ſuch eaſie arguments, the whole Generation, Kind, and Tribe of Eccleſiaſtical Informers, muſt be extinct, and fail for ever.

However, an *union*, and a *laſting union*; and a *foundation*, nay *a certain foundation* for *that laſting union*, are terms of that melodious chime to our ears, that his tendries muſt needs be highly acceptable, even when their diſproportionateneſs to thoſe ends give us feeble hopes that they will prove effectual.

All *union* that pretends to be *laſting*, muſt be *real* and *cordial*; and that it may be ſo, muſt neceſſarily be founded upon *terms conſiſtent with the conſcientious principles* of the united parties: *force* may poſſibly juſtle and thruſt men into *one place*, but never into *one mind*; and *fraud* may palliate for a while the threatning *ſymptoms*, but will never eradicate the *cauſes* of the *malady*: ſuch was that union between the *Greek* and *Latin Churches*, haſtily patcht up in the *Council* of *Florence*, where his *Holineſs*, like an old bungling Botcher ſtitcht together the two *ill-matcht* pieces, which preſently dropt aſunder, and the *rent was made worſe*. All *dough-bak'd Alliances* will give again; and thoſe differences which are compromiſed upon unequal terms, laſt no longer than a fair juncture ſhall tempt the aggrieved party to a rupture. So have we ſometime ſeen a mighty Conqueror impoſe ſuch terms upon the conquered, that they ſuppoſe it *one tacit Article* in the Peace,

That

That it ſhall endure no longer than the injured and weaker ſide can get power to juſtifie its violation.

This *laſting Union* (the Doctor thinks) *is impoſſible to be attained, till men are convinced of the evil and danger of the preſent Separation:* but others think (with equal plauſibleneſs) that *it is impoſſible to be attained till men are convinced of the evil and danger of the preſent Impoſitions:* and the Dr. was once of that mind, when he proved ſo learnedly, *Iren.* p. 1, 2. That *things neceſſary for the Churches peace muſt be clearly revealed:* Which principle had he and others adhered to, his *Weapon-ſalve for the Churches wounds* had been as common and famous as the *ſympathetical Powder* which Sir *K. Digby* aſſures us is in *France* ſucceſsfully practiſed by every Barber. But why is Union impoſſible but upon ſuch conviction? Is it impoſſible for the ſame Power that impoſed theſe ſevere conditions of Union, to relax and remit them? We uſe to ſay, *Eodem modo quo quid Inſtituitur, deſtituitur:* There's no more goes to Repeal a Law, than to Enact it: Nay, it's more poſſible for our *Eccleſiaſticks* to wave what they confeſs *indifferent*, than for the *Laity* to comply with what they judg *ſinful*. But if inexorable ſtiffneſs has made their *condeſcention impoſſible*, who created the impoſſibility? If Union (as matters now ſtand) is become *deſperate*, who put matters into that *deſperate poſture?* It's unreaſonable that any ſhould create a *neceſſity of ſeparation*, and then complain of an *impoſſibility of union:* but 'tis eaſily obſerved, that men to conciliate repute to their own humors, call what they have a mind to, *abſolutely neceſſary*; and that to which they bear an averſion, *ſimply impoſſible*. The Grandees of the Church knew full well, that the generality of the Nation who ſeriouſly attended Religion, had contracted ſuch principles as either condemned the Ceremonious appendages as *ſinful* or *unuſeful*, and therefore *ſinful* becauſe *unuſeful:* they knew well alſo, that theſe Impoſitions had loſt much of that ſtock of credit upon which they had formerly ſet up for themſelves, and driven a pretty trade among us: They muſt needs know too, that to perpetuate the *old Conditions*, would be but to perpetuate *old*

diviſions, and create *new ones*; why then would they venture ſo precious a lading as *Peace*, in that old worm-eaten *bottom*, wherein it muſt certainly miſcarry? But if it be impoſſible to attain Union at cheaper rates with *men*, we muſt look up to *Him* to whom nothing is *impoſſible*, who can open *their eyes to ſee the things that belong to our* common *peace*; and in the mean time enable us to diſcharge the things that *belong to our duty*, and bear thoſe evils which ſhall attend them. What a fine world now muſt moderate and unconcerned Chriſtians have between theſe two, ſome have ſworn to *endeavour a Reformation according to the word of God*, and others ſeem to have taken a ſolemn Oath never to come up to that Rule; and between them both, *Union is impoſſible.*

Well! ſay what we will or can, it's *impoſſible to attain a laſting Union till* Diſſenters *are convinc'd of the evil of* their *Separation.* Pray then convince them of it! That he will do with a wet finger; for *the preſent Separation* (ſays the Doctor) *is carried on by ſuch principles as not only overthrow the preſent conſtitution of our Church, but any other whatſoever.* If that be the worſt on't, we'l endeavour to carry it on by *better principles* that ſhall *overthrow neither*; will that pleaſe him? But what if I ſhould return; *that the preſent Impoſitions* are ſupported *by ſuch principles* as will divide, *not only our Church, but any Church whatſoever.* This would be but a *Rowland* for his *Oliver*: And I am ſomewhat confident, that fairer probabilities may be offer'd for *this* Aſſertion, than *the other*; for as to *matter of fact*, it's moſt evident, that from the firſt Infancy of the Goſpel-ſtate, when the Church was in its *Minority of years*, and *Adult* ſtate of *perfection*, to this very day, nothing has more diſorder'd the outward face of the Church, than the Lordly, Imperious Impoſition of dubious matters: Thus the *Judaizing* Dogmatizers, who would ſtretch all mens Conſciences to their own Laſt, and compel them to a conformity to the antiquated Law of Moſes, began the brawl, and their ſucceſſors in pride have danced after their meaſures, to the World's confuſion. Nor has any Engine of the Devil more bat-

batter'd and ſhaken the well-compacted Walls of God's *Jeruſalem*, than theſe roaring Eccleſiaſtical *Canons*: And if we examine the *principles* upon which they proceed in exacting theſe unneceſſary and doubtful terms of Union, we ſhall find them the very ſame upon which proud *Rome* has introduced the whole Lirry of her ſuperſtitious Obſervances, *viz.* an unaccountable power in thoſe that are the Top, to make them do and ſay any thing that are at the Bottom; in which Obſervances, and upon which Principle, the Chriſtian World never yet united, and it's more than probable never will.

But I intend not to confront, but modeſtly examine the truth of the Doctor's Aſſertion, namely, Whether *the preſent Separation be carried on by ſuch principles as not only overthrow the preſent Conſtitution of our Church, but of any other whatſoever.* And there are two Inquiries I ſhall make upon this ſubject: Firſt, Whether *the principles by which the Separation is carried on, will deſtroy any other Church?* Which if it be true, and that the Diſſenting-Churches are built upon ſuch mouldering foundations, ſuch ſelf-deſtroying principles, it is next to miracle that they ſhould yet ſtand, and neither fall with their *own weakneſs*, nor the *weight* of Oppreſſion wherewith they have been ſurcharged; that they ſhould be continually *batter'd* with *violence* from without, and *undermined* by *policy* from *beneath*, and yet no conſiderable breach be made in their intrinſick Frame and Conſtitution! Now to put this Queſtion out of all queſtion, I will make a reaſonable motion, Leave the Diſſenters quietly to overthrow themſelves by *their own bad principles*, and ſo ſhall the *Church of England* avoid the *odium* of *Perſecution*, which of late has no very good name; and the Separators as *Felones de ſe*, ſhall be condemned to have a ſtake driven through them, who, like the *fooliſh woman*, pluckt down *their own houſe* upon *their own heads*, *with their own hands*. Give them but reſpite from outward fury, and commit them to be crumbled to nothing by the inconſiſtency of their own principles; and they muſt lay upon themſelves, not the Church, the guilt of their own deſtruction. The Diſſenters have

outlived

outlived *one twenty years* of vexation; and if men could be quiet, may outlive twenty more, and in time outgrow all their weakneſſes; ſo that it may tempt an Impartial Conſiderer to think their preſent conſtitution immortal, which no outward aſſaults, no inward Schiſms has been able to diſſolve. There are two things uſually pleaded for the *ſouls Immortality*; *the one*, that it's not compounded of Contraries, ſuch as by inteſtine jars may diſſolve its eſſence; *The other*, that it's not obnoxious to external Impreſſions, ſuch as may ſtorm, and break in pieces its powers. And on both thoſe accounts, the Diſſenters humbly hope their Congregations may prove Immortal, ſeeing they have not felt utter ruine from *the latter*, and do not much fear a diſſolution from *the former*.

Secondly, Let us a little enquire, what truth there may be in the other branch of the Doctors Propoſition; *That the Separation is carried on by ſuch principles as will overthrow the preſent conſtitution of the Church of England.* I ſhall not aſſume the confidence to ſay, That then its preſent conſtitution is none of the beſt and ſtrongeſt: but this I may with modeſty aſſert, That the principles upon which the Diſſenters proceed, will *pluck down* nothing that *Chriſt ever built*, nor *pluck up* any thing that *Chriſt ever planted*; and if they ſhould *pluck up* a few weeds which *the envious one* threw over the hedg, whileſt men ſlept, the good corn would thrive the better for ſuch weeding; if they ſhould *pluck down* a few Imaginations which curioſity has carved, and ſet up in the *Nitches* on the outſide of the Church-wall, the main of the Fabrick would ſtand more firm, diſcharg'd of a needleſs cumber, without prejudice to the foundation: Some few *Traditions*, ſome few unſcriptural *Additions*, ſome ſupernumerary *Ceremonies*, or ſome few *Encroachments* upon Chriſts Regal and Prophetical Offices their principles might overthrow: but what are theſe, all theſe, to the being, the well-being, the flouriſhing being of the Church of *England?* Is it true, that *no Ceremony, no Epiſcopacy?* Was ever a Church built upon ſuch *Woolſacks?* Such diſcourſes as theſe tempt us to ſuſpect there's

nothing *ſubſtantial* in that Conſtitution, which cannot ſubſiſt without theſe *accidents*. Are Ceremonies grown ſuch Inſeparable Adjuncts, that they cannot *Abeſſe ſine ſubjecti Interitu?* We may as well fancy, that to ſcowr off the ruſt, will deſtroy the Iron; or that it's impoſſible to waſh the face, without fleying of the skin: as that a Reformation, according to Gods word, will draw along with it the inevitable ruine of that Church which is founded on it, and reformed by it: And if it reſt upon any other *Baſis*, it needs the principles of none but it ſelf to undo it.

I can allow the Doctor to ſee much farther into theſe matters than I; and yet I cannot be perſwaded that I am ſtark blind; and with the beſt eyes I have, or can borrow, cannot yet diſcern what prejudice it can be to them that worſhip God in a more ſpruce, ſplendid, gentile mode than we do, to ſuffer us to worſhip our God in his own, old, *Scripture-faſhion*: It cannot be denied, that the Proteſtant Churches in *France* are really ſeparated from the Papal *Gallican Polity*: It muſt be acknowledged that their principles carry a direct oppoſition to thoſe of their Adverſaries, that their ſeparation from, and oppoſition to the National frame is much greater than that of Diſſenters from, and to the conſtitution of the Church of *England*; and yet the *Roman* Polity lives, and thrives, and proſpers, and no one of all the Popiſh Kingdoms bears a greater port, or glories more in its exteriour ſplendor and grandeur than that does: Why then cannot *Conformiſts* ſecure themſelves againſt the *Diſſenters principles*, as well as the *Gallican Church*, againſt thoſe of the *Hugonots*? And why may not Diſſenters plead for the ſame freedom, eſpecially as to the immediate worſhip of God, and ordering their own particular Societies, ſince they plead for *leſs* here than they there enjoy, and yet upon *much ſtronger arguments*? for the Diſſenters at home plead for no power to ſet up *Claſſes*, and *Synods*, *Provincial* or *National*, which yet are there indulged them; and they think they might expect a little more reſpect, as being of one and the ſame *Proteſtant Religion*, and not guilty of any

any principles which have any *tendency*, as they that own them have *no deſign*, to overthrow the preſent conſtitution of the Church; ſo that the Doctors Reaſonings are herein ſo unlike himſelf, ſo defective of that evidence and cogency wherewith he attacques the Papal Idolatry, that had I not known his Diſcourſe to have been *Concio ad Magiſtratum*, I might have ſuſpected it to be nothing but *Ad Populum phaleræ*.

The principles upon which the preſent Separation (ſuch a one as it is) is carried on, are ſuch as fear not to appear before any Bar, where Scripture and Reaſon, not Intereſt and Prejudice have the Chair; which though it be not here pertinent to *diſpute*, but nakedly to *aſſert*, leaving their Juſtification to thoſe larger Volumes which are in every mans hand concerned to arrive at ſatisfaction in theſe matters; yet ſhall I direct the Reader to ſome few of them:

(1.) That *every particular Church upon a due ballance of all circumſtances, has an inherent right to chuſe its own Paſtor, and every particular Chriſtian the ſame power to chuſe his own Church*; I ſay not they have a power to *miſchuſe*, but a power to *chuſe*; not to chuſe any, but one that may beſt advance their own edification; at leaſt that no Paſtor be forced upon a Church, no Church obtruded on a ſingle Chriſtian without their own conſent: A principle ſo highly rational, ſo clearly ſcriptural, and of ſuch venerable Antiquity, as ought not upon ſome imaginary or pretended evil conſequences to be exploded, ſeeing the contrary principle is clogg'd with *more real*, than this can be with *ſurmiſed Inconveniencies*: I will thank my friends that will recommend to my choice an able Phyſician, a faithful Lawyer; but I am ſure I love my health, my life, my eſtate ſo well, as not to put the Election out of my own hands into theirs, who are not likely to love me better than my ſelf: and if I chuſe amiſs, the greateſt wrong will be my own: Now what Church this principle would overthrow, I am yet ignorant; If indeed ſuch tyranny ſhould prevail in the world, that men muſt be driven to Heaven, like ſilly ſheep to the Market, and this principle

ſhould a little croſs the humour on't, the Churches of Chriſt would ſtand where they do, and I believe carry a clearer Counterpart of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.

It is pretended, that upon this principle men would chuſe one Paſtor to day, another to morrow, and a third the next; and ſo turn round till they are giddy, or run themſelves out of breath in a wild-gooſe chaſe, till they ſit down, and reſt in Atheiſm and Irreligion: And is this all? The Apoſtle commands us to *prove all things*: muſt we needs therefore never *hold faſt that which is good?* We ought upon great deliberation, advice and counſel, chuſe our own Paſtor; and when we have ſo choſen, ſit down under Gods Ordinance, and wait for his preſence in, and bleſſing upon his own way: And in the pureſt Primitive times, when the Churches exerciſed this power moſt, then were they moſt firmly united, and Diviſions, Schiſms and Separations the greateſt rarities among them: but ſuppoſe the worſt on't; That ſome malecontent ſhould now and then deſert the Communion of *England* for that of *Rome*; Cruelties will never remedy the evil, or the Remedy would be worſe than the diſeaſe; and what if ſome odd *Maggot-pate* ſhould drop out with the Diſſenters Congregations? what is all this to the overthrow of the Church? This priviledg may be *abuſed*, muſt it therefore not be *uſed? Unſetled heads*, and *unſtable hearts* will be wandring; let them go; 'tis a good riddance of them if they be obſtinate; but where this humour has deſtroy'd one Church, this rigorous forcing of Paſtors upon the people has divided and deſtroyed hundreds.

The generality of Diſſenters in this Nation, at this day may be reduced to two Heads:

Firſt, Such who having been formerly fixt with, and under their faithful Paſtors, by their deliberate choice, after good experience of their Miniſterial abilities to teach them the mind and will of God, of their wiſdom to adviſe them in their ſpiritual caſes; of their skill to conduct them through their emergent difficulties, of their meekneſs, ſobriety, heavenly-mindedneſs, and

what-

whatever might recommend to, and inforce upon their conſciences their ſound Doctrine, do ſtill judg it their unqueſtionable duty to abide in that Relation, and by no terrours to be driven, by no blandiſhments to be withdrawn from their overſight and guidance, according to the word of God; judging that ſuch withdrawing, ſuch ſeparation would be that *real Schiſm*, which bears ſo badly in, and is loaded with ſuch guilt by the holy Scriptures.

A *ſecond ſort* is of thoſe who having been ſometime hearers at large in their reſpective Pariſh-Churches, and coming at laſt to have more concernment for their ſouls, and the important buſineſs of another world, and finding that their Parochial Teacher was either ſo *overlaid* with *a numerous throng of people* (which he commonly, but unadviſely calls his Flock and Charge) that he cannot perſonally take care of the hundredth part of them; or ſo engaged in *ſecular affairs*, of more weight to him than his Paſtoral Charge, that he has neither heart nor leiſure to attend ſo troubleſome an employment; or ſo *unskilful in the word of Righteouſneſs*, that he cannot tolerably declare the Counſel of God for edification; or ſo unſound in his judgment, that he's more likely to *poyſon than feed* his people; or ſo *debauched in his life*, that he plucks down more in an hour, than he builds up in a year; or ſuch a Bigot for humane Inventions and Superſtitions, that the naked ſimplicity of divine Worſhip, is either *clouded* to render it *uſeleſs*, or *clogged* to render it *burdenſome*; this perſon ſeeks and finds out ſome other Paſtor (qualified as before deſcribed) to whoſe Miniſterial conduct under Chriſt (the only chief ſhepherd) he commits himſelf; and there peaceably and patiently continues, notwithſtanding the barbarick clamours of Schiſm and Separation: And all this without more prejudice to the Church he forſakes, then it's an injury to a Tradeſman to leave his ſhop, who has *left it himſelf*, or has his hands full of *better cuſtomers*.

(2.) That *it is the duty of every Chriſtian to worſhip God, not only in purity of the heart, but according to the purity of Goſpel-adminiſtrations:*

adminiſtrations : The true meaſure of which Purity, is to be taken from its conſonancy and harmony with the word of God, which has ſufficiently either in *general*, *ſpecial*, or *particular* inſtructed us in the acceptable ſervice of our God: *Purity of worſhip* is no ſuch idle and contemptible thing, to be flam'd off with an impertinent ſtory, that we muſt not ſeparate from a true Church upon *pretence of greater purity :* Nor can I imagine upon what pretence, except that of *greater purity*, the Church of *England* ſeparated from *Rome*, if it be true what we read in *Rat. Account*, p. 293. That *the Church of Rome is a true Church*; and what he further owns, *Defence againſt T. G.* p. 785. *I allow* (ſays the Doctor) *the Church of* Rome *to be a true Church, as holding all the eſſential points of the Chriſtian faith :* and what the Archbiſhop *Laud* confeſſed to that Lady, who would needs go before to *Rome* alone, becauſe ſhe could not bear a crowd, that *ſhe might be ſaved in Communion with the* Roman *Church :* Now if *Rome* be a *true Church*, if ſhe holds *all the eſſential points of Chriſtianity*; If *ſalvation may be attained in that Communion*, why was there ſuch a ſtir about reforming of *Accidents*, when the *Eſſentials* were ſecured? Why ſuch a Conteſt about a little *eaſier way*, when the other way was *paſſable?* Why all this a-do about *a purer Church*, when the other is confeſſed *a true Church?* Theſe things then will follow in the lump from the Archbiſhops and Doctors Conceſſions: 1. That *a perſon, or party may ſeparate from ſome true Church*, which holds *all the eſſential points of the Chriſtian faith*, without the *Imputation of a Schiſmatick*. 2. That *a perſon or party may ſeparate from ſome Church where ſalvation is attainable*, without peril of the guilt of Schiſm. 3. That the only Reaſon (that yet appears) to juſtifie the *Church of Englands* departure from *Rome*, is, that it is lawful in *ſome caſes* to withdraw from the Communion of *a true Church*, wherein all *the eſſential points of faith* are owned, and wherein *ſalvation may be attained*; for the ſake of *greater purity of worſhip*, greater *clearneſs of Doctrine*, and greater *ſecurity of ſalvation*. Is it then lawful for *England* to ſeparate from *Italy* for *greater purity?* It

may

may be lawful for others to ſeparate from *England* for *greater purity:* 'Tis readily acknowledged, that the Impurity of the *Roman* Synagogue is much more, unconceivably more than that of *the Church of England*; and therefore there was not *ſo great cauſe* to leave the *latter*, as the former upon that account; but in aſpiring after Conformity to the Inſtitutions of Chriſt, we are not to conſider *ſo much* what is *behind*, as what is *before*; not ſo much what we have *left*, as what we have yet to *reach*; nor ſo much the *Terminus aquo*, from what ſtate of Impurity we have emerged; as the *Terminus ad quem*, to what ſtate of purity we would arrive: for if it be true that there is ſuch a ſtate of Purity to be obtained, and ſuch a ſtate of Impurity to be avoided, as will juſtifie our forſaking of *this* for *that*; and ſuch a meaſure of both theſe as *will not*; It muſt be exactly ſtated, what is the *loweſt degree* of corruption that will, and what is *the higheſt* that will not warrant a ſeparation: The *Diſſenters being judges*, there are enow at home to excuſe their ſeceſſion; The *Romaniſts being judges*, there are not enow abroad to vindicate the *Church of Englands* ſeparation; and the former are more confirm'd in their judgment, ſince the Doctors *Epiſtle Dedicatory* to the now B. of *London*, prefixt to his *Defence againſt T. G.* where he openly avows on the behalf of the *Engliſh* Church, that *it has reformed thoſe abuſes only, which have crept in ſince the times of the firſt four general Councils:* Now the laſt of theſe four firſt being held at *Chalcedon*, *An.* 451. there were ſuch Corruptions crept into the Church *before that time*, which if impoſed upon any as the condition of enjoying the means of their ſalvation, will juſtifie a ſeparation; but I ſhall the leſs inſiſt upon this, becauſe I am confident *the Church of England* never gave the Doctor *a Commiſſion* to declare ſo much in her name, and I believe will give him as *little thanks* for his labour.

(3.) That *every Chriſtian is obliged* (at leaſt *neceſſitate præcepti*) *to live in the uſe of all Gods Ordinances and Commandments*; and therefore it will follow, 1. That where all Chriſts Inſtitutions are *not to be had*, a Chriſtian may peaceably withdraw from that ſociety,

ſociety, and ſeek them *where he can find them:* Now they ſay the caſe is this; That though we ought not to commit *one ſin* to enjoy all Chriſts Ordinances, yet there are *ſome* wanting in this Church, which if you would commit *a thouſand ſins* to purchaſe you cannot have them: The preamble to the *Office of Commination*, intimates ſome ſuch matter. *Brethren, in the Primitive Church there was a godly Diſcipline, that at the beginning of* Lent, *ſuch perſons as were notorious ſinners, were put to open penance and puniſhment in this world, that their ſouls might be ſaved in the day of the Lord; and that others admoniſhed by their example, might be more afraid to offend: Inſtead whereof, until the ſaid diſcipline may be reſtored again (which thing is much to be deſired); it is thought good, that at this time in your preſence ſhould be read the general ſentences of Gods curſe againſt impenitent ſinners.* Now view this paragraph well in its parts. 1. There was *a godly diſcipline* in *the Primitive times*, if we could have kept it. 2. That this diſcipline was of unſpeakable benefit to the people; *notorious ſinners were put to open ſhame*, others *warned by their cenſures*, and the end of all was the *ſalvation of their ſouls.* 3. That this Ordinance is *not to be found* in the Church at this day; which is a great loſs. 4. That it is a thing to be *much deſired*; and therefore it cannot but be worth the while to ſtep over *two threſholds* for it: it's worth *a wiſh* (if *wiſhing* would do it) with the moſt ordinary Chriſtian on earth. 5. That there's ſomething *ſet up inſtead of it*; but *quo warranto*, we are not informed, nor who has power to *chop and change* any Inſtitution of his, for a new trick, *a Quid pro Quo*, contrived by men. And therefore we may fairly hope, we ſhall not be condemned for Schiſmaticks for practiſing what they *deſire to practiſe*; but alas we *can*, and *they cannot*, becauſe *none hinders them.* 2. It will follow alſo, that where the Inſtitutions of Chriſt may be found, yet if they be fetter'd and chain'd to, or mixed with ſinful Conditions, 'tis the ſame caſe as if they were not at all to be had; for *we can do nothing, but what we can lawfully do.*

To name no more at preſent; we cannot have our *Infants baptized*

baptized without the *Aerial ſign of the Croſs*, as a *Medium* whereby it is dedicated to Chriſt. What then ſhall we do? Here we may have *a part or two* of worſhip with innocency, and peace of conſcience: but if we will *walk in all Chriſts inſtitutions*, we muſt ſeek elſewhere: What ſhall we do then? muſt we ſpend our Lords days in an undecent trotting up and down the Town for one ſcrap here, a ſnap there? or ſhall we ſit down under a well-fixed order of Worſhip and Diſcipline, and joyn with other Congregations occaſionally in what they have? This is the general courſe of Diſſenters, and will deliver us from that argument wherein they ſo much triumph, That *though we cannot joyn with them in all parts of worſhip, yet are we bound to it ſo far as we are perſwaded it is lawful ſo to do:* for we are fully perſwaded 'tis our duty to partake of, and communicate in *every Ordinance* of Chriſt, and therefore ſtatedly and fixedly to adhere to that Church, where, to that Paſtor by whom they are all adminiſtred, not neglecting other Congregations, as Providence ſhall invite, to participate of what they afford, and what without ſin we may have.

(4.) That *it is ſinful to ſubmit, ſubſcribe aſſent to dubious and obſcure terms of Communion:* How far this principle will be allow'd *us*, I know not; but this I know, the *Reverend Doctor* once allow'd *himſelf* the benefit of it, when he juſtified the Separation of the *Church of England* from *Rome*, *Dialogue*, p. 165. *We think* (ſays he) *the requiring of doubtful things for certain, falſe for true, new for old, abſurd for reaſonable, is ground enough for us not to embrace communion with that Church, unleſs it may be had on better terms.* And *we think* that this is ground enough for us, as well as himſelf, not to embrace the Communion of this Church, ſeeing there are impoſed upon us *doubtful things for certain, new for old*, and *we think* too, *falſe for true*; I ſay *we think* ſo; and it was but the Doctors [*we think*] that he oppoſed to *T. G.* And *we think* further, that this will vindicate us from thoſe loud, but empty outcrys of Schiſm and Schiſmaticks; for ſo the Doctor aſſerts, *Ibid. We have often proved, that*

the impoſing unreaſonable conditions of Communion, makes the Church ſo impoſing guilty of the Schiſm. I have told the Doctor *what we think*, I will tell him now *why we ſo think*, that *doubtful things* are impoſed on us *for certain, falſe for true*; and among many others I aſſign this one inſtance, That in the *Catechiſm* of the Church, wherein the *Laity* are concern'd, this Doctrine is contained, That *Infants perform faith and repentance by their ſureties*; and ſuch repentance too, *whereby they forſake ſin*; and ſuch faith, *whereby they ſtedfaſtly believe the promiſes of God made to them in that Sacrament.*

You ſee, Sir, how the Importunity of the Doctor has drawn us out of our reſervedneſs; Diſſenters have been modeſt to their great prejudice, and had rather diſpute the matter upon other Arguments, than thoſe drawn from the ſinfulneſs and unlawfulneſs of the things required, out of that great veneration they have ever had for the *Church of England*; and yet we hope, that they that call and invite, nay provoke, and force us to this task, will not be ſo diſingenuous to trapan us into the ambuſh of a penal Statute; it being unworthy of Gentlemen, and perſons of Honour, firſt to be our *Tempters*, and then our *Accuſers.*

(5.) That *every Chriſtian is obliged to walk with, and in all the ways of God, ſo far as they have attained:* ſo far as they have the knowledg of Gods Will, they are to live up to it; ſo far as they ſee their freedom from bondage, they are to ſtand faſt in it; ſo far as they are advanced towards a perfect reformation, they are to perſevere. All retrograde motions are dangerous; for who knows but that the leaſt declenſion from the ways of God may terminate in Apoſtacy? Foreſeeing Chriſtians therefore will not dare to tread back thoſe ſteps they have taken towards perfection, but rather will be preſſing forward to whatſoever degree of exactneſs in this life is attainable: We queſtion whether we ought not to *aſpire and endeavour after greater purity*; but it's paſt all queſtion with us, that we ought *not to retreat to greater Impurity*; Diſſenters are ſo far from divding, that they would be growing up into greater Union: they would walk as they have

have *attained to know*, and would know more, that they may *walk farther*; know *clearer*, that they may walk *holier*; and for what they *cannot attain* by ſtudy, prayer, and the due uſe of all good means, they would humbly *wait upon God, till he ſhall, and that he may reveal even that thing alſo unto them:* But ſome are ſo haſty and impatient, that they will neither ſtay Gods leiſure, nor theirs, but drive knowledg into their heads, and their brains out of their heads, with the great Churchbeetle.

(6.) Laſtly, I have heard ſome of them own this principle, *That where the Church has no power to command, there it cannot be the peoples duty to obey*; for power to command, and obligation to obedience being Relatives, muſt be affirmed or denied equally and reciprocally: if then the Church has no power from Chriſt (and whence ſhe ſhould derive it but from him, I cannot divine) to impoſe theſe things in Controverſie, it can never be proved their duty to obey in the premiſes: 'Tis a ſad ſight to ſee how Diſſenters have been teazed with that Text, *Let all things be done decently, and in order*; but the clamour grows very weak from that Quarter: and now a *new Text* has been found out, which, they hope, will kill and ſlay all before it: *As we have already attained, let's walk by the ſame rule*; from whence they argue with ſingular acuteneſs, we muſt walk *as we have* attained, and therefore we muſt walk *as we have not* attained; if we be *otherwiſe minded* we muſt wait till God *reveal it to us*; therefore, though we be *otherwiſe minded*, we muſt *act as if like-minded*; and though there be various degrees of light and knowledg, yet we muſt come up to an uniformity of practiſe, as if there were no variety of degrees; which makes a man a certain creature about *ſix pence* better than a horſe, though ſome think upon that principle he's *a ſhilling worſe:* But theſe Doctrines of the Doctors, are *collected and raiſed* from the Text, juſt as our *Collectors raiſe* a Tax upon indigent, non-ſolvent people, who come armed with *a Law*, and *a Conſtable*, to *diſtrain* for that which is not to be had, rather than *the King ſhould loſe his Right*; and certainly never was Text ſo *ſtrained* and *diſtrained* to *pay* what it *never*

owed; never man ſo *Rack't* to *confeſs* what he *never thought*; never was a Pumice-ſtone ſo ſqueez'd for water which it never held; nor ever a good Cauſe ſo miſerably put to its ſhifts, as *to preſs* thoſe innocent Texts *againſt their wills*, which refuſe to come in as *Volunteers to the ſervice*.

Notwithſtanding what has been ſaid, it ſhall ſtand for *not-ſpoken*, if the Doctor can prove his aſſertion, That *the preſent Separation is carried on by ſuch principles as will overthrow any Church whatever*: Thus then he proceeds. *If it be lawful to ſeparate upon pretence of greater purity, where there is an agreement in Doctrine, and the ſubſtantial parts of worſhip: then a bare difference in opinion, as to ſome circumſtantials in worſhip, and the beſt conſtitution of Churches, will be a ſufficient ground to break Communion, and ſet up new Churches.* Now becauſe this *dead weight* always hangs lugging on one ſide, give me leave to put a Counterpoiſe on the other ſide, to make it hang more even: *If it be lawful to impoſe the Ceremonies upon pretence of decency and order, and to exact ſubmiſſion to them upon pretence of Peace and Union, then may* bare will and pleaſure *be a ſufficient reaſon to raiſe the ſevereſt perſecution, to force Communion againſt conſcience, or to deſtroy all the Churches of Chriſt on earth for a bare difference in opinion as to ſome circumſtances.*

Let us however with all tenderneſs examine this way of Reaſoning, always proteſting, 1. That we will not be cheated with that expreſſion of *pretence of greater Purity*: for we do not allow *hypocriſie* to be a ſufficient ground of Separation. 2. Nor with that other expreſſion, *a bare difference in opinion*, which we would explain both here, and hereafter, if we underſtood the meaning of it: Theſe things premiſed, I obſerve in his Argument ſome things *prudently ſuppoſed*, and thoſe ſuppoſals as *wiſely improved*. *Firſt* then, here are ſome things very *prudently ſuppoſed*: As (1.) that *there is a confeſſed agreement* between the differing parties *in Doctrine*: But where ſhall we find that *ſyſtem of Doctrine*, in which the Agreement is ſuppoſed to lye? ſhall we ſeek it in the *Holy Scriptures*? In vain! one party can find a

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Church-power there to make Canons, in which the other party ſhall be bound to acquieſce upon pain and peril of the guilt of Schiſm: but the Diſſenting-party can ſee *no ſuch matter:* Thoſe again have found a Doctrine there, that the Addition of any thing *in ſpecie* to Gods word or worſhip, which he has not commanded *in genere*, is culpable; but the other party wonder where they pickt up this ungrateful Doctrine; ſhall we then go ſearch for this ſuppoſed, or confeſſed agreement in the 39 Articles? there, or no where, we may expect to meet with it; but here alſo are we miſerably diſappointed, for the Doctor himſelf has ſatisfied us in his *Rational Account*, p. 54, 55. That *the learned Primate of Ireland* (underſtand not B. *Uſher*, but *Bramhall*) *tells us the ſenſe of the* 39 *Articles* of this Church. *Neither doth the Church of* England *define any of theſe Queſtions neceſſarily to be believed, either* neceſſitate præcepti, *or* Medii—*but only bindeth her ſons for peace-ſake not to oppoſe them*; And more fully in another place. *We do not ſuffer any man to reject the* 39 *Articles of the Church of* England *at his pleaſure, yet neither do we look upon them as eſſentials of ſaving faith, or legacies of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but in a mean, as pious opinions, fitted for the preſervation of Unity; neither do we oblige any man to believe them, but not to contradict them.* Now if this be true, I would fain learn how the Doctor can be ſo confident that we are agreed *in Doctrine*, when we are at a loſs, and wholly to ſeek *in what Doctrine to agree?*

You are ſurprized (Sir!) I doubt not at this diſcovery: Has not *the Church of England* defined in her 39 Articles any thing *neceſſarily to be believed?* then it ſeems the *eſſence and exiſtence of a God* is not defined to be neceſſary. Are theſe Articles *no eſſentials of ſaving faith?* then it's no eſſential point of faith to believe, that *Chriſt is the eternal Son of God.* Are theſe but *pious Opinions?* then it's a pious Opinion that we are *juſtified by faith without our own merits:* Is it enough *not to contradict them*, and that we are *not obliged to believe them?* then an *Atheiſt* is agreed in the Article of the *Godhead*, if he has but wit enough to keep a good tongue in his head: And the *Socinian* is agreed in the

Article

Article of the *Trinity*; the *Papiſt* agreed too in the Article againſt *Tranſubſtantiation*, provided always they can but bite in their ſentiments; nay the Proteſtants at *Rome* are agreed in the *Articles of Trent*, the Chriſtians in *Conſtantinople* are agreed in the *Alchoran*, for I think they *do not believe them*, and yet have ſo much wit as *not to contradict them.*

Here they torment us with new-coyned Diſtinctions, of *primary* and *ſecondary*, *affirmative* and *negative Articles*; ſome *more refined*, others of an *inferiour Alloy*; Well then, let us ſuppoſe that the *negative*, *ſecondary*, the Articles of the *lower Claſſis* are not neceſſary to be believed in order to ſalvation; Are we agreed in the *primary*, *affirmative*, and thoſe of the *higheſt form?* I doubt not! for granting that the Diſſenters *aſſent to them*, and the Aſſenters *diſſent*; or ſuppoſe on the other ſide, the *Conformiſts agree* to them, and the *Nonconformiſts diſagree*; 'tis all a caſe, they are in the ſame degree of diſtance from each other: Now the plain truth is this; The Diſſenters generally agree with *that book*, which is commonly called the 39 Articles, which was compiled above a hundred years ago, and this *book* ſome men call *the Church of England*; but then they are far from Agreement with the leading Clergy-men of this generation (who as near as we can gheſs do conſtitute the Church): And this is certain, that the Rulers and Teachers of the Church do really differ from one another, and therefore Diſſenters muſt needs differ from ſome of them; but which of them is the Church, we know not; If *both parties*, the Church muſt neceſſarily be of *two Religions*; and ſo this pretended agreement is not *real* and *ſincere*, but *notional*, *ſpeculative* and *imaginary.*

(2.) 'Tis further ſuppoſed, that the diſagreeing parties are yet *agreed in the ſubſtantial parts of worſhip:* To which I muſt anſwer, 1. That we know of no Commiſſion, no Charter granted by Chriſt to any Church, to inſtitute *any parts of worſhip at all*, whether *ſubſtantial*, *integral*, or *circumſtantial*, or by what other deviſed terms they be diſtinguiſhed, or confounded, 2. Nor have we heard of *any Rule* aſſigned by Chriſt to warrant them how

how to diſterminate the *ſubſtantial parts* of worſhip from the *Integral*, or the *integral parts* from the *circumſtantial:* How eaſie a thing were it to demoliſh a *ſubſtantial part* of worſhip, pretending it to be only *a circumſtantial part?* or to magnifie ſomething of their own, which they have dreſt up like worſhip, and then exact Conformity to it, and Union in it in the Name of Chriſt? for it's a common obſervation, That when they would wheadle us into Compliance, then every thing is but *Circumſtance*; but when they proceed to chaſtiſe us for Nonconformity, then the ſame things are nick-named *ſubſtantials*, matters of *moment*, ſuch as without which *no Church, no Government, no Worſhip* can poſſibly breathe or ſubſiſt.

And yet if the matter were well ſearcht into, perhaps we are not ſo clearly agreed in the *ſubſtantial parts of worſhip:* An *outward viſible ſign of an inward and inviſible grace, whereby a perſon is dedicated to the profeſſion of, and ſubjection to the Redeemer, is a ſubſtantial part of worſhip:* If it be inſtituted by Chriſt, 'tis a *divine, lawful part of worſhip*, and he will bleſs it; If only appointed by man out of his great tenderneſs to ſupply the defects of Chriſts Inſtitution, this is alſo *a part of worſhip*, but *humane*; it has the *matter*, and outward *form*, only wanting the *right efficient cauſe*; it wants that which ſhould give it the ſtamp of *Authentical and warrantable* worſhip.

Again, we ſee with our eyes worſhipping towards *the Altar, the Eaſt*, and at the ſound of the word *Jeſus:* and theſe things are made the Motive of worſhip, if not ſomething elſe; perhaps *no Canon* enforce theſe, but yet they are generally practiſed by all that hope to make earnings and good wages out of the Churches preferments. Now whether the Conformiſts *exceed the Canons*, or the Nonconformiſts *fall ſhort of them*, 'tis ſtill the ſame caſe, and there will be the ſame or greater difference, than if the former kept level with the Rule, and the other came ſhort of it; or the latter came up to the Rule, and the other tranſcended it.

The Doctor will tell us, *That to bow at the Name of Jeſus, is*

no

no more than going to Church at the Tolling of a Bell, Defence, p. 864. and is very facetious and pleaſant with his adverſary *T. G.* drolling about *Whittingtons Bells*, and *Meg* of *Weſtminſter*, p. 867. nor ought any man dare to check the excellent wit of theſe Repartees, only it had been wiſht he had beſtow'd a little fancy on *Whittingtons Cat:* but I aſſure the Doctor in many indifferent mens judgment, the Objection is not ſo eaſily dofft off; for why may not an *Image* give warning to *the eye* when to worſhip God, as well as *a Bell to the Ear?* 'Tis true indeed, the *Papiſts* have preferred an Image higher, than to be *Motivum Cultûs*; but the queſtion is, Whether they do not ſin in applying it to this *lower uſe*, to make it an ordinary ſtated *Motive to worſhip?* If they do, how ſhall we excuſe our own Adorations? if not, why do we not introduce Images into our Churches, as well as theſe other of bowing towards the Altar, *&c.*? which if once our Church-men ſhall venture upon (as with equal reaſon they may do), they'l find them not *a Bell to Toll Diſſenters into the Church*, but thouſands of *Aſſenters out of it.* Beſides his Illuſtration is very lame, though witty enough; for the *Bell tolls out of worſhip* to Convene the people to the worſhip of God: but *the ſound of the word Jeſus* is uſed in *the midſt*, in the *height*, in the *heat* of worſhip, when the ſoul ſhould be moſt firmly, ardently intent upon its Devotion, and not ſit liſtning and watching, as *Whittingtons Cat watcht the Mouſe* (there 'tis for you) for the caſual ſtarting of a word, and the dropping of two ſyllables. But if it be a duty to give external reverence to God when ever the word *Jeſus* is named, there's more need of it in our ordinary Converſes, and the ſecular affairs of this world, when thoſe divertiſements diſtract our minds from the actual thoughts of God, which might be retrieved by this Doctrine; and ſo that *word* might do the ſervice of *another Bell*, I mean that which in Popiſh Countries goes *Ting tang, ting tang*, before the *Hoſte*, when carried to the ſick, or dying, from which all that meet it are obliged to take the hint, and fall down and worſhip.

The

The moderation of that Canon, 1640, which recommends bowing towards the Eaſt, or Altar, is very commendable: *In the practiſe or omiſſion of this Rite, we deſire the Rule of Charity preſcribed by the Apoſtle may be obſerved; which is, That they which uſe this Rite, deſpiſe not them who uſe it not; and they who uſe it not, condemn not thoſe that uſe it.* I would gladly hear a fair Reaſon given, why the Apoſtle ſhould *preſcribe the Rule of Charity* to be obſerved in this *one Rite* or *Ceremony*, more than another? why the *Rule of Charity* ſhould take place in bowing *towards the Altar*, and yet the *Rule of ſeverity* in the *ſign of the Croſs*, and *kneeling at the Lords Supper?* what ſolid Reaſon can they give, why they make fiſh of one, and fleſh of another: The Apoſtle *preſcribes a Rule*; and they will make uſe of it, when, where, and in what caſes they pleaſe; and in others where 'tis as uſeful, lay it by, like one of their vacated Canons. Is it becauſe we are bound to walk according to *the Rule preſcribed by the Church?* why are not they bound to walk according to *the Rule preſcribed by the Apoſtle?* Are we more bound *to obey them*, than they *the Lord Chriſt*, ſpeaking in and by his immediately inſpired ſervants? why could they not have relaxed the other Canons to the moderation of this? or why not have ſcrewed up this to the inflexible rigour of the others? was it *for peace-ſake* that we were indulged in this one? Let the ſame Motive prevail for the ſame Indulgence in the reſt! was it *to ſhew their Authority*, that they may bind and looſe, command what they pleaſe, and leave what they ſee good at liberty, without rendring a Reaſon, but that of their Wills? Such arbitrary power is too great an encroachment upon the freehold of Conſcience, and Soveraignty of Chriſt, and will juſtifie any Chriſtian to aſſert that liberty againſt it, wherein Chriſt has inſtated him. Was it becauſe the people had been *broken by long uſe and cuſtom to the others*, and therefore they would ſtruggle hard to keep the ground they had got, when this latter was but *a Novice, a Candidate, a Probationer* for Acceptation, which if the people would tamely bow their necks unto, they might be cramped with a more *peremptory Canon* when time

ſhould ſerve; but if they proved reſtiff and croſs-grain'd, the next Convocation might make an honourable retreat?

And what if now we are ſtumbling ere we are aware upon the true Reaſon of the diverſity between the tempers of this, and ſome other Canons? However, whether theſe things be *commanded*, or merely *recommended*, or barely *permitted*, all is a caſe as to my Argument; for I find theſe things practiſed by all our leading Church-men; All the *Fathers of the Church*, all the *Mother-Churches* are agreed; all that pretend to any hopes of *comfortable Importance*, are agreed to outrun the Conſtable, and though herein they outrun one another, and all of them outrun the Diſſenters; and this is a difference in ſomething more than *a circumſtance*, even at leaſt in a *circumſtantial part of worſhip*; yet muſt we be ſuppoſed to be agreed.

This laſt mention'd Canon of the Church, I hear is repealed by *Act of Parliament*, which plainly proves, that *the Civil Magiſtrate* has more authority even *in matters of worſhip*, than the whole Church, as a Church, when moſt ſolemnly met together in the Repreſentative Church (as they call it) of *a Convocation*; and yet the practiſe runs with a full ſtream towards their own old Canon, as if they ſecretly gave great Deference to the *Authority of the Church againſt the Parliament*, for the leading-practiſe of the grand Eccleſiaſticks is *tantamount* to a Canon, nay to a Law, to thoſe whoſe hopes and expectancies teach them a dependance on them; ſo that this now obſolete Canon has paſt into the nature of a Commandment, much like the old Statute, *Ne Rectores proſternant Arbores in Cœmeterio*; the Tenor whereof runs thus: *Which thing we will not command to be done, but we will commend it when it is done.*

Secondly, The Doctor having prudently ſuppoſed *one half*, comes to prove *the other half*; and it's wiſely done to loſe nothing for asking: He argues thus: *If it be lawful to ſeparate upon pretence of greater purity* (ſuppoſe as before ſuppoſed) *than a bare difference in opinion as to ſome circumſtantials will be a ſufficient ground to break Communion, and ſet up new Churches.* To

which

which I anſwer, 1. by *denying the conſequence*; ſtrange! what deny the conſequence? what can be plainer? Where there's *an agreement, a confeſſed agreement* in *doctrine*, and *the ſubſtantial parts of worſhip*; what can you pretend to divide in, to ſeparate upon, but ſome *ſorry circumſtances*, unleſs you will make a Schiſm about Goats Wool, or Moon-ſhine in the water? But if you pleaſe, Sir, to have a little patience, I'le tell you! *ſubſtantial parts of worſhip*, and *bare circumſtances*, are not ſo *immediately oppoſed*, but there lies a certain thing *in the middle* between them: upon which *middle thing*, though otherwiſe we were *agreed in Doctrine, and the ſubſtantial parts of worſhip*, it will be *lawful to divide*; I ſay it again, there is a *Medium* between *ſubſtantial parts of worſhip*, and *bare circumſtances*; A bare circumſtance is that which adheres to *every action*, as it is *an action*; to every *natural body*, as 'tis *a natural body*; every action, whether *civil* or *ſacred*, muſt be performed in *ſome time*; every body muſt be circumſcribed *in ſome place*; A *ſubſtantial part* of worſhip, is a Term of the Doctors, and his Friends making, and we may expect it ſhould be of their explaining; As far as I can underſtand, they mean by it either, 1. that which God has *expreſly commanded*; or 2. ſome *notable parts of worſhip* as the Sacraments; or 3. that which God *mainly requires*, as the directing our hearts to himſelf, as the *object* and *end* of our worſhip; or 4. *I cannot tell what*, till they tell me: but beſides theſe two extremes, there are ſome intermediate things, which are neither *natural circumſtances* cleaving to the perſon that worſhippeth, nor to the Religious action it ſelf, on the one hand: nor yet on the other hand, are they commanded by God, either *in genere*, or *in ſpecie*, i. e. God has neither commanded the *things themſelves*, nor are the things *neceſſary* to the performing *thoſe things that he has commanded*; nor any of *their kind*; nor are they included *in any general rule, or precept* of the Goſpel: And yet it has pleaſed the Church, that is, the *Epiſcopal party*, to exalt theſe things to a high preferment in worſhip, to ſignifie the ſame things with the Sacramental Elements, to make them *neceſſary*

to ſalvation, as far as man can make them, that is to lay them as Conditions in the way of our enjoying the Sacraments, which, they ſay, *God has made neceſſary to ſalvation*; and lay the ſtreſs and weight of the *Churches peace, ſafety and unity* upon theſe things, tranſlated out of their proper places; and that theſe things ſo uſed, ſo applied, ſo cloathed with their preſent circumſtances, are ſinful, is not our bare *opinion* (as the Doctor wiſely phraſeth it) but our ſetled *judgment*, which we have, do, and ſhall maintain againſt them, when they have once leiſure to underſtand the Queſtion: We have therefore ſomething to divide upon, beſides *ſubſtantial parts of worſhip and circumſtances*. And now where is this conſequence, which to an intelligent and obſerving Reader, is the only ſtrength of his Sermon? But we need never fear it, the Clergy will be ſure to find us matter for quarrel and contention, or it ſhall go hard, beſides a parcel of *inconſiderable circumſtances*, which may be determined, but very ſorrily by thoſe that pretend moſt to the power; for he that worſt may, commonly holds the Candle. But 2. for further anſwer, let him go back to the former Diſcourſe, where I have proved that the foundation upon which his diſcourſe is built, is weak, and therefore the whole ſuperſtructure muſt tumble upon his own head; for he ſuppoſes there is *an agreement in Doctrine, and the ſubſtantial parts of worſhip*, which we either deny, or cannot grant till we are taught what he means by them.

The Controverſie therefore ſtands upon the ſame bottom on which it has ſtood theſe hundred years, and more, like that famous *ſtone in the Weſt*, which they ſay, *a child may ſhake*, but *a hundred men cannot overturn*. Every wrangler can joſtle our principles, but the United force of the world cannot overthrow them; *True men* may be killed, but *Truth* will outlive all enmity. This argument of the Doctors has been frequently anſwered, and expoſed; but now like an old Livery new turn'd, and freſh trim'd up with a new Lace, it paſſes for a ſpruce piece of Gallantry, a brisk ſally of Ratiocination,

cination; ſo conſiderable it is, *who* it is that ſpeaks and writes; more than *what* is ſpoken or written! So have I known a ſorry Jade, which in the hands of the poor Countrey-man, would not give five Marks; when in the hands of a Gentleman, a little curried up, well managed by a nimble Jockey, and ſtoutly voucht for by one that was no ſlave to his word, fetch roundly Twenty Guineys at the hands of a youngſter that had more money than wit.

What has hitherto engroſt the whole ſtrength of the Doctors *Reaſon*; he now comes to ſet a fine edg and gloſs upon with his Rhetorick: To ſeparate (ſays he) *conſidering the variety of mens fancies about theſe matters, is to make an infinite Diviſibility in Churches, without any poſſible ſtop to further Separation.* Which is nothing but the Eccho of that Charge, which from their *Roman* Adverſaries has ſo long and loudly rung about their own Ears. I ſhall only ſay, That *the power which he aſcribes to National Churches, conſidering the great variety of the fancies and humours in finding out and impoſing their own Inventions, will but make burdens innumerable and intolerable, without any poſſible ſtop to further and greater vexations*; only let him not always miſcall *Conſcience* by the ſcandalous name of *Fancy!* The very truth is, we have no Mathematical Certainty in theſe matters; no ſuch Demonſtration, *Cui non poteſt ſubeſſe falſum*, which *Archbiſhop Laud* (and by conſequence the Doctor) requires of all Diſſenters; when yet he could find no ſuch Demonſtration for *the being of a God* (as I ſhall evince ere long). But ſome will *ſcruple* where *they need not*; and others to cry quit with them, will *impoſe* where *they ought not*; and thus between *weakneſs* and *wilfulneſs*, between *little knowledg* and *great pride*, humble peaceable Chriſtians are like to have a fine time on't: But from ſome inconſiderable, and petty inconveniences, ſome little trouble that ariſes to a Church from the levity and volubility of mens minds, to bring in that enormous, monſtrous principle, of enſlaving all mens judgments and conſciences, forcing them

them to ſurrender their Reaſons to naked will and pleaſure, and put all that's worth owning in their Beings, into the hands of thoſe of whoſe fidelity and tenderneſs to keep and diſpoſe of them, they have had no better experience, and can have no good ſecurity; is a Medicine worſe than that Poyſon, even as much as 'tis better to have a Rational Soul, though ſubject to miſtakes, than the Soul of a Brute, which may be managed as you will, with a ſtrong Bit and Bridle.

Honoured Sir! you ſee how I have wearied my ſelf, to tire you, with the prolixty of this Letter; and now to refreſh you in the cloſe, I'le tell you a piece of News: The Doctor tells us, That *if once the people be brought to underſtand, and practiſe their duty as to Communion with our Churches, other difficulties, which obſtruct our Union, will be more eaſily removed.* It's incredible what the various Votes of the Coffee-houſes are about thoſe words; ſome ſay, Ay! If there were *no Nonconformiſts*, there would be *no Nonconformity*; if there were *no diſagreement*, we ſhould all *be agreed*: others again deny it; and ſay, That though the people were *brought to underſtand, and practiſe all their duty* which they owe to God and man, yet the ſame difference, the ſame diſtance would continue, except it be firſt proved (which they are always *coming towards*, but can never find a time *to come to*) that it is their *duty* to hold entire Communion with the Pariſh-Churches: others again of the more warm tempers, aſſert, That if the people could be brought to *underſtand and practiſe their duty* in theſe matters, thoſe Aſſemblies would be thinner than they are; and ſome proteſt it's a moſt *Meridian* Truth, that if men could be brought to *conform in practiſe* (but there lies the cunning on't) though againſt the ſhins and conſcience, *all other difficulties would be eaſily removed*; for they that are once engaged in a practiſe (whether by ſlaviſh fears, or worldly hopes, it makes no matter) muſt ſtudy Arguments to defend their practiſe as well as they can, and they vouch infallible experience

to

to juſtifie their opinion; for (ſay they) throw a Dog into a River over head and ears, and if he will not take care to ſwim out, let him be drown'd.

It's mighty pleaſing to me to hear the Doctor profeſs, he has *endeavoured to purſue his deſign, without ſharp and provoking reflexions on the perſons of any:* for though you, Sir! have noted ſeveral paſſages, as inconſiſtent with the ſincerity of this expreſſion, yet I doubt not to clear up his Integrity. You mention *Page* 38. where, I confeſs, the Doctor does ſay, *The moſt godly among them* [*Diſſenters*] *can leaſt endure to be told of their faults.* This did a little ſtartle me, but not ſtumble me into a disbelief of his Honeſty: for though he tells us, he has not uſed *provoking reflexions on the perſons of any*, i. e. *by name*; yet he might with a good conſcience, and without contradicton to his word, make ſharp provoking reflexions upon the whole generation of the Diſſenters, and condemn them in the lump: And whereas you inſiſt upon't, that the expreſſion is either a *ſcurrilous Sarcaſm*, unbecoming a Sermon; or very *unchriſtian*, as preſuming to judg mens hearts; or a ridiculous piece of non-ſenſe, ſeeing they cannot be ſuppoſed the *moſt godly* (except they be all Villains) *among them*, who *cannot bear reproof for their faults*, which is a main part of godlineſs: yet I have this to ſay; 'Tis exceeding hard for Miniſters when they mount the Pulpit, to leave their pride and paſſion behind them in their Studies, or in the Desk: beſides a Sermon, except a little larded with a line or two of bitterneſs, would not have pleaſed the pallate of the Reader from the Preſs, whatever it might, ſome of the Auditors from the Pulpit: Nor muſt you, Sir! be too rigid in exacting all things to the *preciſe Rule of Gods word*, when the Doctor in his *Sermon* has propounded you *another Rule* than that of the word *to walk by*.

In

In a word, Sir! the greater trouble I have given you in this Epiſtle, will eaſe you of much in the Diſcourſe it ſelf; And having here opened the ſprings of his Reaſonings, you may with more eaſe and delight trace them in all the windings and twinings of the ſtreams. If I obtain your *pardon*, I ſhall receive it as a *Reward*; and for you, *not to Cenſure*, is more than ſome twenty mens *Commendation*; and if I fall ſhort of your expectation, I ſhall yet gain one advantage, That you will not hereafter engage, in what is above him,

Your Faithful Servitor,

T. P.

THE Miſchief of IMPOSITIONS: OR, A SOVERAIGN ANTIDOTE Againſt a Late Diſcourſe, CALLED, *The Miſchief of* SEPARATION.

SECT. I.

The Author's Introductory Diſcourſe *conſidered; Deſigns for* Peace and Union *plauſible; as ordinarily managed, unſucceſsful.*

I Have read an elegant Oration in praiſe of a *Quartane Ague*; Another, Extolling the incomparable virtues *of the Gout*; and one great wit would needs write in commendation of its only enemy, *Folly*, but never yet could meet with a *Panegyrick* in Honour of *Fiſty-cuffs*, and *Bloody noſes*. Whoever therefore ſhall employ his Pen to write, his Tongue to plead in the Cauſe of *Peace and Union*, is ſecure to carry the day, without controul; and may claim the Priviledge of him that is of *Counſel for the King*, to have the *firſt and laſt word* to himſelf.

But many cry *Hoſannah* to *Peace* one day, who will crucifie it the next: And whilſt they ſeem with the *good Angels*, to proclaim *Peace on Earth*, yet ſome ſo far do imitate the *evil ones*, that they have *no good will towards men*. So common it is, to make a *Preface for Peace* to Uſher

in an *Alarm to war*; and Invitations to *Union* a fair Pretext for perſecution; as a Reverend Divine once told his Auditors in the Pulpit, *Plain dealing is a Jewel, but he that uſes it will dye a Beggar.*

There is nothing more common than to preſs *the neceſſity of Union*, and yet at the ſame time to continue the *neceſſary cauſes of Diviſion*: which ſort of Rhetoricians might do well to conſider, that whilſt they declaim moſt paſſionately againſt the *evil of Separation*, they do but whip their *own crimes upon other mens backs*, and reproach themſelves by railing at other mens faults. In which popular diſcourſes, we hear of nothing, but the *prejudice*, *paſſion*, *Intereſt* of thoſe who will *not obey*; but not a word, I warrant you, of their own *Pride*, *Rigor*, and *Imperiouſneſs*, in what they command; always ſtudying and pretending Reaſons why matters ought to be *wrong*, but never offering rational expedients to ſet what is wrong, to *Rights*.

Were it lawful to be pleaſant in a caſe ſo ſad as ours is, this *Author* has given us the temptation and that only by *Inverting* his words, without the leaſt *perverting* of the Truth: *There's no impoſſibility, nor conſiderable difficulty to Retrieve the univerſal Peace of the Chriſtian world, if all men were ſuch Chriſtians as they ought to be*; (which I dare engage for them they never will) *but till mens Lordly pride be ſubdued to a greater degree than the world has yet found it, 'tis in vain ao expect this ſtate of peace and tranquility in the Church. Nor ſhall we need to go far,* (not a ſtep) *from home, for a ſufficient evidence of this; for though our differences* are ſuch, *as the wiſer Proteſtants abroad, not only condemn, but wonder at,* (and the Proteſtants at home ſmart under the effects of them) *yet has it puzzled the wiſeſt perſons among us, to compoſe them*; becauſe they that preſume themſelves to be, and really ſhould have been ſo, have more ſtudied to bring in the *cauſes*, than to remove the *conſequences* of our troubles: But the moſt ſurprizing thing in all the Doctors preamble, is his ſad complaint, that *neither the miſeries we have felt, nor the calamities we fear, nor the terrible judgments of God upon us, nor the unexpected deliverances vouchſafed to us, nor the common danger we are yet in, have abated mens heats, nor allayed their paſſions, or made them more willing to unite with our eſtabliſht Church, and Religion.* And may not others make as ſad Reflections upon theſe things as himſelf? That neither theſe, any of theſe, nor all theſe, nor as many more than all theſe, have abated mens Rigors, nor mitigated their fury, nor allayed the ugly luſt of trampling on, and triumphing over Conſcience, nor quencht that immortal ſpark of aſpiring after Empire and Dominion over ſouls, but ſtill they are as unwilling, nay more unwilling to render the preſent conſtitution ſuch as may ſafely, and comfortably

be

be complied with? And have they indeed *felt ſuch miſeries?* Why has not *paſſion* taught them *compaſſion?* and what is that burden they *feel?* are loads of Honour, and Wealth grown ſuch inſupportable grievances? or do they not call (like thoſe that are to be *preſt to death*) *more weight for the Lord's ſake, more weight!* But do they indeed *fear future calamities?* give others a little eaſe from their *preſent calamities!* are they apprehenſive of *approaching danger?* what will they do to *prevent* them? which of their ſeverities will they ſuſpend till the danger is over, that they may then more ſafely, at it again? Are the *terrible judgments of God upon them?* why will they not keep one of *Gods faſts to remove them?* Iſa. 58. 6. *to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppreſſed go free, and to break every yoak.* Some will ſay, this ſcripture is impertinently applied: well, Be it ſo! yet I have this to comfort me; 'tis not ſo hugely wide as that quoted by the Dr. *Judg.* 5. 15, 16. Who confeſſes he *neither underſtood it, nor was concern'd in it.* Nor yet ſo much as his *Text*: who infers that we muſt *walk further then,* becauſe we are commanded to *walk as far as we have already attained.* But have they enjoyed ſuch *unexpected deliverances?* Let them not ſay, *we are delivered to commit all theſe abominations!* And are we all in *common danger?* Let us ſhare in the *common favour!* contribute to the *common ſecurity!* and do not weaken the hands of friends, ſtrengthen the hands of *common enemies*; nor make it indifferent to diſſenters, whether they be *ſmothered in the houſe,* or forced to venture their necks by *leaping out at the windows:* for ſo have the miſerable *Hungarians* been tempted to think it better *to live,* nay, to *dye once,* under the *Ottoman* ſword, than to be *always dying* under the *Auſtrian* tyranny. I ſhall then begin to believe that man is afraid of a Paroxyſme of the Gout, who will retrench his intemperance to prevent it; and will then ſuppoſe them real and ſincere in complaining of what they feel, or fear, when they will forbear, or do, at leaſt ſome very little thing, to remove the one, and obviate the other: But *Dominion* even in a *Dungeon* is too ſweet a morſel to be ſpit up again, unleſs God gives a ſtrong vomit; A prelatical ſpirit will be perſecuting when in exile at *Frankfurt*; and the *Jeſuites* thought it worthy their ambition, to vex the *Seculars,* even in *Wisbich Caſtle.*

Let then the Dr. conclude with that grave ſentence. *All parties pretend a Zeal for Peace, ſo they may have it in their own way; by which it appears, that it's not peace they aim at, but victory, nor unity ſo much as having their own wills.* I will therefore compound with him at ten ſhillings *per pound,* that is, let him take one half of this for truth, and reſign me the other; *That one partie has a Zeal for Peace,* ſo they may have it

in *their own way*; and then I ſhall gain this by the bargain; That it's not *Peace they ſeek, but Victory*, nor *Unity*, ſo much, as having their own wills.

Peace then (without bringing in St. *Auſtin* for a voucher) *is a good thing*, yes, *a very good thing* it is, if we could catch it; but thus have I ſeen one ſport with his Dog, ſhewing him a cruſt, which when the poor Cur has zealouſly jumpt to reach, he holds it up higher, and never intends him one ſnap of it.

Our *Romiſh adverſaries* (it ſeems) *do continually upbraid us with our Schiſms and Separations.* (Let 'em look at home!) *To take off which reproach* the Dr. *thinks, it would be happy, if all thoſe who agree in renouncing the errors, and corruptions of the Roman Church, could as eaſily join together in the great duties of our common Religion, that is in our prayers, and praiſes, and Sacraments, and all ſolemn acts of divine worſhip.* And will this make us *all happy?* Then I proclaim to all Proteſtants from this day forward, *ſolid happineſs!* for we all *join together in the great duties of our common Religion*; for though we join not in the *private fancies, niceties, and opinions* of ſome one partie, in the *great duties common to all Proteſtants* we are fully agreed: Agreed in the *matter* of our prayers, if not in the *form*; in the *matter* of our praiſes, though not in the *mode*; in *Sacraments*, though perhaps not in ſuperſtitions annexed to them; in the *Acts of Divine Worſhip*, though not in the *parts of humane worſhip*; in the *ſubſtance*, not in *Ceremonie*; and in one *God*, *one Chriſt*, though not in *one Place*, which probably we never ſhall till *St. Pauls* be built, and probably not then neither, but muſt adjourn our *local meeting* to the day of the *General Aſſembly*: Thus are we *all agreed*, who are agreed, and *ſo far as we* are agreed in *renouncing the errors and corruptions of* Rome; but if it ſhall appear that we are *not agreed in this*, in vain do we expect agreement in other things.

There are *two things*, at which the Church might poſſibly aim, whenever merciful providence ſhould recover it out of the gloomy ſhades of perſecution; the *one*, Purity, the *other* external Splendor and Glory: But it's ſadly obſervable that Church-men who always engroſs to themſelves the conduct and management of affairs, commonly begin at the wrong end of their work; Securing in the firſt place their own Grandeur and Dignity, and leaving the Reforming the Abuſes which had ſilently crept in, as a matter of leſs concernment, to their better leiſure: So was it in the days of *Conſtantine*, Queen *Elizabeth*, ſo was it in *our own*, when the Clergy fell a ſcrambling for preferments, (as boys for a largeſs of nuts and apples) whilſt Reformation lay a bleeding, a gaſping, a dying, for they had

had other Irons in the Fire, which must not cool; so the *Sorbonist* in his *Philosophia Vulgaris refutata*, informs us; *Jam postquam horrendæ tyrannorum Carnificinæ defierunt, & pax omnimoda parta est*, &c. That is, *When once the bloody shambles of Tyrants by God's Providence were shut up, and welcome Peace began to shine upon the late clouded Churches, they wisely fell to work with exterior things, and busied themselves about Religious Rites, Ceremonies, Ornaments; about matters of Order, and Subordination; about the Degrees of Ministers, their outward Splendor, the power and efficacy of Church-Discipline; about Laws, Canons, and Ecclesiastical Government; about the Union, and Combination of Churches; about the exalting some in pre-eminence above others, and subjection of the poorer to the greater and richer; about maintaining Uniformity, and preventing Schisms. And this part indeed the Church happily effected; and when they should have proceeded to the other of Reformation, a dismal hurricane, by the irruption of the Northern, and barbarous Nations, overspread the face of the Church with Egyptian darkness, that it was some Ages before she could recover her former brightness.*

This is the sad Fate that commonly attends great and general Deliverances; Churchmen are *cumber'd with many things*, and neglect *the one thing necessary*; and instead of reducing Doctrine, Worship and Discipline to their Original Integrity, to what they were *in the beginning*, are otherwise employ'd about setling Liturgies, re-inforcing Ceremonies, exacting Uniformity, advancing their own Dignity, till God, in righteous judgment, removes from them the opportunities of *acting for themselves*, who slighted those inviting junctures wherein they *might have served their God*. And most men have noted, that within these twenty years Providence offer'd them *three seasons*, wherein with great ease, they might have healed our Breaches; the first, after His Majesties happy Restauration; the second, after the Plague, Fire, and War; the third, after the Discovery of the late Horrid and Popish Plot: but yet it pleased not God to give them, with the opportunities, to see the things that belong'd to our Peace.

We see then Peace is a Commodity everywhere exposed to view: They complain *that we cheapen it, but will not buy*: And indeed we would not out-bid our Purses, nor *buy Gold too dear*. We complain that they offer it, but at such unreasonable Rates, that we cannot reach it; but so have many done, that have got rich Goods in their hands, set 'em too high, out-stand a good Market, and at last, perhaps, may be glad to put 'em off for an old Song.

But it's time to come to my self, and attend the *Doctor*, who, after an eloquent

eloquent Preamble, *in commendation of Peace*, which all men *grant*; and of the *danger of Diviſions*, which none ever yet *denied*; is pleas'd to command our Attendance to the Word of God, written in *Philip.* 3. 16. *Neverthelesſ whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame Rule, let us mind the ſame things.*

SECT. II.

The Text propounded. The Doctor's *manner of raiſing his Doctrines, conſidered; his Suppoſitions, Poſitions, modeſtly examined; and proved vain in themſelves, and uſeleſs to his preſent purpoſe.*

THE Reverend Author, having ſet himſelf this great Task, to prove *Conformity lawful*, the preſent *Separation ſinful*, has choſen the words of the Apoſtle, *Philip.* 3. 16. a little varied from the Original, and ſomething from our own Verſion, that by that diſguiſe it might better comply with, and ſubſerve his great deſign.

Neverthelesſ whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame Rule, let us mind the ſame things.

A *Text*, from which of all in the whole Bible, Diſſenters leaſt expected their Conviction; for who could have believed that the Apoſtle, who, in *ver.* 15. leaves the *otherwiſe minded*, to *God's inſtruction*; ſhould, in the next *verſe*, aſſert the Churches power to make Impoſitions to their deſtruction; that he ſhould blow cold and hot with one and the ſame breath; and mount an Eccleſiaſtical Canon, upon a Platform of Moderation. Some wonder'd where ſuch a killing Text, ſhould be kept ſecret all this while, that the world ſhould never dream of, never dread the leaſt danger from it: But it ſeems there was a neceſſity for it; for being reſolv'd not to bring down their Principles to Scripture they would try if perhaps Scripture might be brought up to their Principles; ſo eaſie will it be to convert Diſſenters, if once they can pervert the Scriptures.

I cannot conjecture what ſhould ever flatter them, that this Text would become their Proſelyte, except it be one of theſe two things, or both:

Firſt, That they met with the word Κανὼν in it, a *Rule* or *Canon*, not in *a Military Notion*, (for great Guns were not then invented) but an *Eccle-*

Eccleſiaſtick acceptation; for *ſpiritual Artillery*, which has always done the moſt dreadful execution: And ſo *to walk by the ſame Rule*, muſt be (or it's a thouſand pities but it ſhould be) to order and govern our ſelves by the Conſtitutions of a Convocation, which then was not invented, but in After-Ages, might haply be erected: But their own admired *Grotius*, has enter'd a miſchievous *Caveat* againſt this Notion, which may poſſibly defeat all their hopes from it: *In MS. deeſt* Κανόνι, *ut τῷ αὐτῷ συστοιχεῖν, referatur ad illud εἰς ὅ.* That is, *In his Manuſcript Copy, the word* Κανόνι, *or Rule, is quite left out, ſo that the expreſſion*, Let us walk by the ſame, *muſt be referred to the Antecedent εἰς ὅ, or* [*To that*;] and then read the words, *What we have attained, let us walk up to the ſame.* And now, I hope, the ſenſe is not ſo mortal to Diſſenters, as was threatned; and comes to no more but this, *Unto whatſoever meaſure, or degree of knowledge we have reach'd, let us walk ſuitably to it:* which *one Note* has utterly, nay malicioufly ſpoil'd the deſign of a famous Sermon, and render'd the whole Diſcourſe, one great Impertinency. A *ſecond* thing that might give them hopes of ſome good from the Text, was a well-ſounding expreſſion, *Let us mind the ſame things*; which, at a bluſh, ſeems to favor the great Darling of *Uniformity*. And the Reverend Doctor, to render it more plauſible, has quite through his whole Sermon made bold to render the Command thus, *Let us mind the ſame things:* excepting *p.* 37. where he had occaſion to render it, *Do the ſame things.* And what man dares now queſtion, but that we are all bound to nick it to a Tag, to a Pin, to a Point, in an uniform practice, in all the minutes, all the punctilio's, all the nice and capillary circumſtances of worſhip? All which fine ſport, the bare reading of the original Text will ſpoil, which is only this: τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, *to mind*, or *let us mind that very thing*. Here then we find no *things*, nor *ſame things*, nor *doing the ſame things:* but that we *mind the very thing*, which the Apoſtle mention'd to them; and practiſed himſelf, *ver.* 14. *This one thing I do, I preſs towards the mark for the prize* (βραβεῖον) *of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* And the ſame thing he commands others, *ver.* 15. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect*, mind that thing, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν: what you ſee *me mind*, that I charge *you to mind, that very thing*; but if any of you be ſhort in your attainments, let them wait, and we will wait, till God reveal it to them.

Theſe things would have continued exceeding plain, had not ſome private Reaſons, neceſſitated men to render them perplexed and obſcure; which how the Author of this Sermon will be able to do, we muſt now attend.

[1] The firſt ſtep the Doctor takes, to make the words his own, is this:

this: *We are* (says he) *to consider, that an* unhappy Schism, *or* wilful Breach *of the Churches Unity, had begun in the Apostles times:* there did so, and we have *consider'd* it, and do find two things considerable. 1. That *a Schism*, and *a wilful Breach*, are terms equivalent; where there is *no wilful Breach* of Peace, there's *no Schism.* To *be turn'd out of the Church* against my will, and besides my deserts is none of my Schism; to *be kept out of the Church*, by the old turn-pikes of sinful conditions, is none of my Schism; *Wilful Obstinacy*, is the formal reason of Heretical Pravity, and Schismatical Levity. *Errare possum, hæreticus esse volo:* Invincible Ignorance may betray me to mistakes, but I can chuse whether I will be an Heretick or no: so may I possibly separate, and judge I have just reason so to do; yet will I not be a Schismatick, nor shall they, with all the skill they have, make me one; for I will still maintain a Christian frame of spirit towards those from whom I am forced to separate, and separate no further than I am forced. 2. The *Reason of that primitive Schism*, is more considerable, which (as the Doctor informs us) *was upon a difference that arose concerning the necessity of keeping the law of* Moses; *and that which made the Schism more dangerous, was, that the beginners of it pretended a Commission from the Apostles.* Let now the Reader believe me, I did verily believe it would come to this at last; That all the Authors of Divisions and Separations, would first be imposing unnecessary, doubtful, unscriptural terms of Communion, and then to set a good face upon a bad matter, would pretend Catholick, Apostolick Traditions, Commissions, Decretals, Extravagants, Canons, Constitutions, to justifie their own Usurpations; and when once they are got into the Saddle, and have the whip-hand of the poor Laity, all that cannot run like Tumblers through these Hoops, shall be rated as Schismaticks: Now because the Doctor has a little disguis'd the matter in his Discourse, to make it smile upon his pretensions, I will give the Reader the naked truth of the whole business.

There were in the Apostles days some Judaizing Christians, who being not well weaned from the Mosaic Ceremonies, would needs compel the Gentile Converts to their old observances, for which they plausibly pretended, that those Rites having been once confessedly establish'd by Divine Authority, and not yet explicitely repealed by any Countermand of Christ, equal to that whereby they had been enjoined, were still in full force, power, strength and virtue, and did oblige the gentil world to give their assent and consent to them; and in pursuance of this imposing humor, they would have obtruded upon them a Canon, *Acts* 15. 5. That *except they were circumcised, and observ'd the law of* Moses, *they could not be saved*

ved. To this Uſurpation the Apoſtles oppoſe their authority, and taking the Gentile Chriſtians into their protection, vindicate their Liberty, and command them *to ſtand faſt in it*, and not tamely ſurrender themſelves to the will and pleaſures of theſe imperious Maſters: And becauſe St. *Peter*, by his compliance, had hardened theſe Judaizers in their Superſtitions, St. *Paul* takes him up roundly, *reproves him to his face*, and ſtrenuouſly aſſerts their Goſpel Liberty; which had he not done, the Doctor thinks, *all the Gentile Chriſtians had been forced either to a compliance with the Jews, or to a perpetual Schiſm:* But herein I muſt beg his pardon; for though they had been forced to a *Separation*, it had been no *Schiſm*, which viſibly had lain on the other ſide; for *Paul* in his admonition to the Church at *Rome*, lays all the blame of the Separation not upon them that ſeparate, but on thoſe that gave cauſe to the Separation. *Rom.* 16. 17. *I beſeech you, Brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences among you, and avoid them.* Where he points to us theſe three things. 1. That they who *cauſe diviſions*, are the *culpable dividers:* the Impoſers muſt be reſponſible for the evil conſequences of their Impoſitions. 2. That it's *lawful*, nay a duty, *to divide from thoſe*, that unwarrantably give ſuch cauſe of diviſion; ἐκκλίνατε ἀπ' αὐτῶν· decline, or depart from them. 3. That any Condition of Communion impoſed *beſides*, as well as *againſt* the Doctrine *received from the Apoſtles*, is a ſufficient ground to condemn the Impoſers, to juſtifie thoſe that reject ſuch conditions; for ſo we read, παρ' ὃ παρελάβετε, ἢ ὑμῖν εὐηγγελισάμεθα· And ſo we find it rendered, *Gal.* 1. 8. *Though we, or an Angel from heaven preach* any other Goſpel *unto you, then that we have preach'd unto you,* παρ' ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα, *let him be accurſed.*

Hitherto matters do not work to the Doctor's mind; he does *movere*, but *nihil promovere*; the ſtep he has taken, has ſet his cauſe a ſtep backward,

[2] And therefore he will try another Experiment, whether the Epiſtle with the Context may not invite, or draw the Text to his Intereſt.

(1) His firſt approach he makes thus: *The Apoſtle exhorts the* Philippians *to an unanimous and conſtant reſolution in holding faſt to the faith of the Goſpel, in ſpight of all the malice and threats of their enemies,* Phil. 1. 27, 28. And moſt wholſom counſel it is, God give all Diſſenters grace to take it; for *if once the fears of Troubles and Perſecutions, make men afraid to own and maintain their Religion, it will be an eaſie matter for their enemies firſt to divide, and then to ſubdue them.* This will not yet do the Doctor's work, nor undo the Diſſenters.

(2) He makes a nearer approach, thus: The Apoſtle *beſeeches them,*

in the moſt vehement and affectionate manner, not to give way to any differences or diviſions among them. Very good! *As much* then *as in us lies, we will live peaceably with all men:* But what ſecurity ſhall we have that they will do ſo with us? We will labor that there be no differences in judgment, (which yet in our imperfect ſtate is not to be expected) but if there be *differences*, we will take care there be no *diviſions*; for we are taught to maintain Chriſtian affections towards thoſe that are of *different apprehenſions* from our ſelves, and *different practices* too, proportionable to thoſe different ſentiments; for ſo the Apoſtle adjures the Church, *Phil.* 2. 1, 2. *To be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, and of one mind.* Upon which words the Doctor gives us this Paraphraſe, q. d. *I have ſeen the miſerable effects of Diviſions in other Churches*, (indeed *Diviſions*, that are *cauſed by*, or *iſſue out in*, hatred, malice, envy, perſecution, have effects as miſerable as themſelves, but what miſerable effects did he, or we ever ſee, that all mens faces were not of one complexion?) *Let me therefore entreat you---to avoid the firſt tendencies to any breaches among you*; (and unneceſſary Impoſitions lay the firſt foundations to theſe Miſchiefs:) *entertain no jealouſies, no unjuſt ſuſpicions of each other,* (as that the moſt godly among thoſe that differ from you in leſſer matters, can leaſt endure to be told of their faults; or that the tenderneſs of their minds, out of meer ſhame-facedneſs, keeps them from declaring truth:) but *ſhew all the kindneſs you are able to your fellow members,* (and ſurely you are able to wave theſe Bones of Contention, theſe make-bate Ceremonies; you are able to forbear railing, perſecuting, are you not?) I confeſs Pride is an impotency of mind, and Paſſion a great weakneſs of ſoul; the ſtrongeſt wills have commonly the weakeſt reaſon to govern them; and the ambition *of glorying in the fleſh* of thoſe whom they can make to truckle to their Humors, and Crotchets, is a pretty fleſh-pleaſing vanity, which I hope in time you will overcome; ſo that hitherto we can ſmell no Plot the Doctor has upon us, no ſcent of Match or Powder; or how by theſe Ambages, and remote Fetches he intends to attack us, we diſcern not.

(3) In the next place therefore he tells us, the Apoſtle *gives Cautions againſt ſome perſons, from whom their greateſt danger was*, viz. *ſuch as pretended a mighty zeal for the Law.* Nay, I always ſuſpected our danger would come from that Quarter! but am glad we know our enemies, and do promiſe him, we'll keep a ſpecial eye upon them in all their motions. Some ſuch there are in the world, who are exceeding zealous for Ceremonies and Traditions, and would triumph, if they could carry it, for *Bel, and the Dragon:* ſuch as would knead the world into its old maſs and lump, rather

rather than want of their wills; and as the Judaizers would renounce Christianity, and return to *Moses*, except the Gentiles would conform to their legal observances; so have we some such who will revolt to *Rome*, unless they may (not retain, for who hinders them? but) impose their own admired knick-knacks upon others. Now such as these the Apostle deals smartly with; he calls them *Dogs, Evil Workers, the Concision*: because they tore in pieces the seamless Coat of Christ, into shreds and tatters, confounding the minds of peaceable Christians, who would willingly have united upon those plain, easie, reasonable terms upon which they had already received, and professed Christianity, only these peevish trouble-houses would not let them. And this is remarkable, that the Apostle never gave one hard word to the Conscientious Dissenter, nor one good word to the Judaizing Imposer, in all his Epistles.

To what end now is all this pompous, ceremonious train of words? to what end are these Positions, Suppositions, and Preliminaries? why so many Lines, Entrenchments, Galleries? why these tedious Approaches? why all this Spanish Gravity? why does he not fall aboard with his Text, and storm it? Alas! Things are not yet ripe, and ready for such hot service, and therefore----

(4) ---The Apostle *having done this, he persuades all good Christians to do as he did*, ver. 15. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded*; What was that? to assert his liberty? he *did so*, and would *not be brought under the power* even of *lawful* things, 1 *Cor.* 6. 12. Was it not to put his neck under the old *yoke of bondage*? he did so; or did he scorn *to build up what he had once pluckt down*? he did so; and would he have us *do as he did*? *Content.* Shall we stand fast in our liberty as he in his? *Content.* Must we not build up whatever of humane inventions we have pluckt down? *Content.* Would he have us as many as be perfect, be thus minded? *Content.* Let as many as are *as he was*, do *as he did*; They that are honour'd with his Attainments, let them come up to his Evangelical Practice: when *we were children*, we thought, spake, acted as children: Are we grown up to *Manhood*? let's *put away childish things!* It is a shame not to outgrow our Trinckets, our Rattles, our Hobby-horses, when we have outgrown the Rickets. Shall it be said of Christians, as of the Grecians, Ἕλληνες ἀεὶ παῖδες· *The Greeks are always children*: But such were the Judaizers, *always learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth*: And you may as soon whip these huge great Boys out of all Religion, as out of one Ceremony; so fond, so doating, so peevish, froward, awkward, such a whimpering, such a whining, such puleing and powting for Ceremonies, as if they had lost that famous En-

gine of the Nutcrack, or had been plundered of a pin-box: I have read of a learned man in this nation, who tells us he had quite other ſentiments of, and apprehenſions about death than moſt men; others were *afraid to die*, but he was *aſhamed to die*: Really, many are afraid of the Ceremonies as ſinful, and I am not without thoſe fears too; but methinks I am greatly aſhamed of 'em, as I ſhould that any ſhould ſpie me riding upon a penny Colt, or a Gelding: No, St. *Paul* would have them *that are thus perfect*, grow up into a more manly and generous way of ſerving and worſhipping God; Though the famous *Alcibiades* did once (to pleaſe a child) condeſcend,

Ludere par, impar, equitare in Arundine longâ.
To play (the fool) *at even-or-odd*;
And for a hobby-horſe, ride a rod.

5. Hitherto we have felt no wound, but like the bird in the tree looking at the gunner, wonders what he's fidling about, till of a ſudden ſhe's paſt feeling: At laſt the Author comes nearer: *Becauſe* (ſays he) *many diſputes, and differences as to opinion and practice might happen among them, he therefore lays down two Rules to govern themſelves by*; Here now the Dr. beats up, and gets within our Quarters, and very ſubtilly would inſinuate, to the unwary Reader, that *the Apoſtle* gave two Rules about one and the ſame thing, whenas 'tis evident he gave but one, nor was it poſſible he ſhould give more in that caſe: The caſe which the Dr. ſuppoſes, is that there were *differences of opinion and practice* among the *Philippians*: Let it be ſuppoſed! Does the Apoſtle give *two Rules* in that caſe? No! but *one ſingle Rule*, which was the Rule of *mutual forbearance, and leaving one another to Gods Inſtructions*: but in *Another Caſe*, where Chriſtians had *attained* to be of the *like mind*, there the Rule was, that they ſhould *walk up* and according to *what they had attained*: But we muſt go through now we are in, and therefore let us hear what theſe *two Rules* are, and what *uſe* he will make of them.

1. *Rule. If any* happen'd *to differ from* the body of Chriſtians they lived with, *they ſhould do it with modeſty, and humility: not breaking out into factions, and Diviſions, but waiting for further information*: Now here we want that Accuracy, that might have been expected from a perſon of his Abilities: For, 1. He puts it as a *rare and extraordinary Caſe*, [If any happen] ſuch a one as might fall out in an Age, or ſo, whereas this was a moſt familiar Caſe, and that which the Apoſtle met with everywhere, that there was *a difference of apprehenſions* about the leſſer things at leaſt, of Religion; nor was he to ſeek what direction to give in the caſe, but uniformly determines, that they ſhould *not judge, nor deſpiſe* each other upon theſe accounts,

counts, nor was there ever any Church at any time wherein these differences did not *happen*: 2. He lays the stress of the duty upon those that *differ from the Body of the Christians they live with*: It is very true, the Church, or *Body of Christians* at *Philippi*, at that time, was sound in the Doctrine of the Gospel, evangelical in their worship, and regular in government and Discipline; and therefore it was the duty of those that differed from that *body*, not to separate from it; but suppose any *happened to differ from the* body of Christians they *lived with*, which were not so; must the Rule hold *equally*? is there the same obligation in the case also? what if a Christian should happen to live at *Rome*? what if it should be the Drs. lot to live there? must he be under the same obligation *not to divide from the body*? 3. He supposes the Rule only to be given to the person that *happens to differ from the body* of the Church, whereas the Rule is mainly given to the Church, how they are to demean themselves toward a dissenting brother, *viz.* to wait till God shall reveal his mind to the person otherwise minded: Neither is he to act, nor the Church to compel, till God clear it up to his Conscience, that he may act like a *Saint*, or, since *Saints* is a term of reproach, at least like a *Man*, and not a Beast: 4. He disguises his rule, by those *Terms of Art*, faction, separation, *&c*, whereas *faction* and *separation* are two things, the one always sinful, the other many times a duty.

2. *Rule.* For those that are come to a firmness, and settlement upon the Christian Principles, he charges them by all means to preserve Unity, and Peace among themselves. Now these things also are laid down with as much obscurity as one could wish: For, 1. Is it not the duty of those who are not *arrived at that firmness and settlement of judgment*, to preserve Unity and Peace? without question! only this will handsomly mislead us to a mistake that Unity and Peace among Christians are unattainable till they are all of one scantling in Opinion; for this is the fancy that is gotten into mens heads, That we must have peace with all, that in order to Peace there must be Unity of judgment, and uniformity in practice. 2. He says the Apostle *charges them by all means to preserve Unity*, which if we understand of *Gods means* is very true; but we are not to use our own means, such as a naughty heart would prompt to us; not to prostitute our Reasons and Consciences to the lust of men, but if it be possible, as much as in us lies, to live in Unity and Peace.

The Text I see is exceedingly unwilling to be dragg'd into the Doctor's service, two or three plucks therefore he will try more, and if it will not come, leave it as incorrigible, and untractable: for (says he) the Apostle supposes two things.

§. 1. *The necessity of one fixed, certain Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments*

tainments among Christians: This the Dr. calls one of the *Apostles*, but 'tis certainly one *of his own suppoſals*: For, 1. We are even now told of *two Rules*? one for them that *differ from the body of Christians they lived with*; and here the Rule was, to *leave them to Gods immediate Care for farther illumination*; but now there is but one *fixed, standing Rule*, notwithstanding the *different attainments of Christians*: 2. And to what end is there a *fixed Rule*, inflexible, and untreatable; when dissatisfaction of Conscience about these matters will exempt any man from it? or to what purpose had we a Rule for Indulgence, if now it must be vacated by this certain and fixed Rule? 3. If there be such a necessity of a fixed standing Rule, notwithstanding mens different attainments; It's a wonder the Scripture that contains all things necessary, should not speak of it, neither of the matter of this Rule; nor the makers of the Rule, nor the Rules by which the Rule must be made. 4. And if there must be one fixed Rule, then perhaps *The particular forms of Church-government* may in time prove *jure Divino*. 5. And what are we the nearer to satisfaction to be told of a Rule, and not to be told also what that Rule is: If a Scripture Rule, we agree, but that will not serve his turn; if a Rule sent down by Tradition, that would do his work, but that we want evidence, it was intended by the Apostle: If Christ or his Apostles had made the Rule, with what security of Conscience, with what satisfaction of mind could we acquiesce in it? but if it be a rule made by the Church governours of after times to hamper, and snickle all that they can get within their clutches, it will alter the case, and we see no reason to give that subjection to it. 6. If there be a necessity of one fixed Rule about things in their own natures indifferent, then when those things by their particular Circumstances, are reduced *ad actum exercitum*, what must the poor Christian do? If the Rule commands him to *Act*, and the Circumstances have made the Act sinful in *that time, place*, &c. where is he now? here's a rule against his acting, here's another made by men for his acting; they might as well have made one Rule more, and that is to hang 'em out of the way, rather than to leave them to be tormented between two contrary Rules. 7. If there be a necessity of one fixed Rule in circumstantial matters, how comes it to pass, that the Church of *England* has determined that she has power to alter and varie these Rules according as she sees cause. And, 8. Must this Rule be for the *Universal Church*, or a *National Church*, or a *Particular Church*? If for the *Universal Church*, it crosses the judgment of your *National Church*, which says it is not necessary that *Rites and Ceremonies be alike*: If for a *National Church*, it must be proved that ever the Apostle understood any such Creature: If for a *Particular Church* only, then what

will

will become of *Uniformity* in the face of the *National Church*, which is the great thing for which this Rule is pretended useful and necessary. 9. If there be *a necessity of one fixed standing Rule, notwithstanding differing attainments*; then either this fixed Rule must yield and bend to those weak ones that have not attained to see the lawfulness of it, or those weak ones must be stretch'd and screw'd up to the fixed Rule: If the *former*, how is it *fixed* that in thousands of Cases, every day must *bend*? If the *latter*, what is become of the *other Rule*, that allows those that have *not attained, to stand or fall to their own Master*, and appoints them to be *left to God's gracious instruction*? For, 10. The Rule prescribed by the Apostle, *If any man be otherwise minded, is the only fixed Rule in matters of indifferent nature*; which Rule is plain Nonsense, if there must be another Rule, to which all Christians must come up, notwithstanding their dissatisfactions about it. 11. That which exceedingly prejudices the Doctor's Rule, is, that the universal current and stream of all Expositors run against him. *Grotius* thus glosses it; *Etiam qui de Ritibus aliter sentiunt, interim sciant Evangelii præcepta, quæ Divina esse persuasi sunt sibi esse sequenda*: i. e. *They that differ in their judgments about Rituals, must yet know, that they are obliged to walk according to the Precepts of the Gospel, which they are persuaded to be of Divine Authority.* So that the Rule of Scripture was that alone to which they were obliged, who were not satisfied about Rites and Ceremonies. So Tirinus, *Regulam hic intelligit à Christo & Apostolis ejus præscriptam*; He understands the Rule prescribed by Christ, and his Apostles. *Zanchy* takes it for the *Rule of Brotherly Love and Holiness*; and, in a word, all conspire against the Doctor's interpretation. 12. And why could not the Apostle have spoken intelligibly? had he pretended any such thing, it had been easie to have said, Notwithstanding what I said just now of leaving those that have not attained so far as you and I to God's instruction, yet my will is, that you all walk by one fixed and standing Rule, whether you have attained or no, 'tis no great matter; I'll not indulge these peevish tender Consciences, Let 'em Conform, or the Prelates and their Chancellors shall *admonish them, admonish them, admonish them*, thrice with one breath, and then Excommunicate, and deliver them up to the Devil. To conclude, the Doctor had much better have employed his Talents in demonstrating, 1. That by a Rule, is meant a fixed Rule about things indifferent, or dubious. 2. That the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy in Convocation, Synod, or Council, must be the fixers of this Rule. 3. That all are bound, notwithstanding their various measures of light, to conform to this Rule. 4. That the Governors of one Church, or many Churches, may make Rules for other Churches, and force them upon

upon their Conſciences to be obſerved by Divine Right; inſtead of which, and much more he has to do; he has ſuppoſed, what he can never demonſtrate.

But that we ſhall ſoon ſee, for now he draws apace towards Argument.

I. He tells us, That *the phraſe, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν κανόνι, ſeems to be a continuation of the former alluſion to* a Race: *for the firſt thing the Greeks were wont to do as to their Exerciſes, was to circumſcribe the bounds wherein they were to be performed*; now *that which fixed and determined thoſe limits, was called κανὼν by the Greeks*, &c. Had it not been for theſe *Olympic*, and other Games and Exerciſes, I cannot tell what our modern Criticks would have done for work; but what does στοιχεῖν allude to? is that term alſo applied to *a Race*? No! it's borrowed from the *grave marching of an Army*, not the *furious running* of *a Foot-match*: 'Tis *verbum militare*, a term of Art in the Tactics, ſayes *Zanchy*. But grant that alſo, (for I'll yield as much as reaſonably he can deſire for peace-ſake,) ſtill the Queſtion will recur, what that Rule is, by which we muſt either *ſoberly walk*, or ſwiftly run? And there are two things that chiefly ſtand in competition.

1. *A Rule of Charity*, and mutual forbearance under different practices ſuitable to their different judgments.

2. *A Rule of Severity*, which determines to one uniform practice, notwithſtanding the diverſity of judgment, ſo that all muſt be drawn, hang'd, and quarter'd, that come not up to this Rule: 'Tis the latter, the Doctor now ſo ſtifly contends for; and none can blame him if he be for that Rule, becauſe ſuch a Rule would be for him, if he could get it, which is the beſt Reaſon he can produce for this Rule.

II. He pleads, therefore *it cannot be the* Rule of Charity, *becauſe the Apoſtle had ſpoken to that juſt before*; but rather (think I) it muſt be that ſame Rule, *becauſe the Apoſtle had ſpoken of it juſt before*, and therefore he calls it *the ſame Rule*, τῷ αὐτῷ κανόνι, that is, that very Rule he had juſt before mention'd; for they that have attained to the higheſt meaſure of knowledge, are not exempted from the Rule of Charity towards thoſe that have leſs knowledge; and it's new Grammar, (as well as new Divinity) that a *Relative* cannot agree with his *Antecedent*, becauſe the Antecedent *went before*; and will deſtroy the ſureſt way of interpreting Scripture from the Coherence and Context, if we muſt conceive there

there can be no reference of what follows after, to that which immediately went before.

III. The Doctor yet argues farther, That *the Philippians underſtood already what Rules he had given them, when a Church was firſt formed among them, and therefore when he mentions a Rule, without declaring what it was, we have reaſon to believe it was ſuch a Rule which they well knew he had given them before.* Well then, 'tis confeſſed that the Rule the Apoſtle exhorts them to walk by, was ſuch a Rule as he had before given them; we are aſſured he had given them a Rule concerning all neceſſary things; we are not aſſured he had given them any Rules for unneceſſary things: if the Doctor can, let him produce the Rule, and we are ready to Conform to it. Apocryphal Rules about new Rites, new Ceremonies, new Churches, new Government, we find none, and therefore muſt be contented with what he had given them before, *viz.* that Rule by which the New Creature is guided and governed. *Gal.* 6. 16. *As many as walk according to this Rule, peace be on them.* But we have got *another Rule*, and they that walk not according *to that Rule*, though conſcientiouſly and ſtrictly walking by *the other, no peace ſhall be on them, no peace ſhall be with them*, but wrath and vengeance, Fire and Fagot; but that time is ſhort.

IV. The Doctor yet further argues from 1 *Cor.* 11. 34. *The reſt will I ſet in order when I come.* And 1 *Cor.* 7. 17. *As God hath diſtributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, ſo let him walk, and ſo ordain I in all the Churches.*

Here then we have an Order, an Act or an Ordinance of the Apoſtle, a fixt ſtanding Rule, to which all are bound to Conform themſelves; but what now if they who call themſelves the Apoſtles Succeſſors, will not ſuffer us to Conform to the Rule? The Apoſtles Rule is, *Let every one walk as God has diſtributed to him.* The modern Rule is, *Let every one walk farther and faſter than God has diſtributed to him.* Well, there's no remedy; for, (ſayes the Doctor) *This ſhews the Apoſtles did not leave all perſons to act as they judg'd fit*; No, I believe they did not, but as God by his Apoſtles *thought fit*; not by Traditions, but Scripture Revelations; not by the Fleſh, but by the Spirit; not by their own Wills, or the Wills of men, but by and after the Will of God. But *the Apoſtles made Rules determining their practice:* No doubt of that; but was it about *Mint, Aniſe, and Cummin*, or the *great and weighty things of the Law?*

V. Still he proceeds; That although *Men might pretend that the things were not in themſelves neceſſary*, that they *were ſcrupled by ſome perſons, and therefore were not fit to be impoſed upon any, yet he does not find that the Apoſtles forbore to give Rules in ſuch caſes, and to oblige Chriſtians to obſerve them.* To which I ſay,

1. That I do not find that the Apoſtles did attempt to give Rules in ſuch Caſes, other than the Rule of Charity, of kindneſs, of mutual forbearing one another; the Doctor does not find they did forbear. Muſt we believe they *did every thing*, we *do not find they did forbear*? Really I do not find they did forbear preaching againſt Liturgies, the Sign of the Croſs, Archbiſhops and Biſhops, Archdeacons, and Deans; will he allow me to conclude, that therefore he did preach againſt them? what wild work would an Argument from Authority negatively in matters of Fact make with our Ceremonies? And what a Hubbub had it raiſed, if ſuch Reaſonings were to be found in the Sermons of the Diſſenters?

2. Let him therefore ſhew plainly, That the Apoſtles interpoſed their Authority, to impoſe upon the Diſciples any one thing, which was not antecedently, ſome way or other, neceſſary to that Impoſition; and never ſtand caſting a miſt before our eyes, by ſaying the Apoſtles *gave Rules in ſuch Caſes*, when the Caſes are vaſtly different from thoſe that are in debate amongſt us.

VI. He goes on, What the Apoſtle thus impoſed, *was not on the meer authority of Apoſtles, but as Church-Governors, whoſe buſineſs it is to take care of their preſervation.* Not as Apoſtles, but as Governors! Things well joined, but ill divided! *As they* were Apoſtles, *ſo were they* Governors of Churches, to whom *the Care of all the Churches* was committed, 2 *Cor.* 11. 28. There was indeed another matter that ſhould have here been ſhuffled in, and is handſomly inſinuated, That the Apoſtles in eſtabliſhing Rules for Rites and Ceremonies, and thoſe other things that are ſuppoſed, acted not as extraordinary Officers, whoſe power was to expire with their perſons, but as ordinary Guides, who were to have Succeſſors in their whole Ruling work to the end of the World; but this is far more eaſily hinted, than proved: we deny therefore, and wait for evidence,

1. That the Apoſtles ever made Rules for the determining of unneceſſary Circumſtances, and impoſed them on the Churches as terms of Communion.

2. That

2. That Dioceſan Biſhops, or Metropolitans, are the Apoſtles Succeſſors in the governing of Churches.

3. That if they did ſucceed them in any part of their office and worke, yet that they have the ſame fulneſs of power, as wanting their infallible direction, wiſdom, prudence, and other qualifications that might either move Chriſt to entruſt them with that power, or perſuade Chriſtians to ſubmit to their power.

VII. To ſweeten, and ſet off the Diſcourſe, the Doctor has formed a moſt ingenious compariſon between the power and skill of a General of an Army to command, and the Duty which private Soldiers owe to their General on the one part, and the Authority, Wiſdom and Conduct of Church-Governors, to order the Eccleſiaſtical Militia, and the Duty that private Chriſtians owe to their Orders on the other hand, which would have taken before the Trained Bands, or the Artillery Company; at preſent let it paſs for as much as 'tis worth, that is, a ſpecimen of wit, and a rare piece of ingenuity.

VIII. But his great Refuge, his ſafe Retreat, is in and to the *Council at Jeruſalem*, concerning which, the Reverend Author expreſſes himſelf thus: *Although there were many doubts and ſcruples in their times about ſeveral Rites and Cuſtoms, yet the Apoſtles did give Rules in ſuch Caſes, and bind Chriſtians to obſerve them, as we find in that famous Decree made upon great deliberation in the Council of the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem.

To which it were enough to ſay, That the Apoſtles did give Rules, but not ſuch as are now given: They gave Rules in the Caſe that lay before them, but that Caſe was nothing akin to thoſe Caſes which are now before us; That in what Caſe ſoever the Apoſtles did give Rules, it's nothing to them, who pretend a power to give Rules to us, except they can ſhew a Commiſſion as fairly drawn and ſealed as the Apoſtles could produce for their Determinations: But yet more particularly,

1. That Decree of the Apoſtles was about things neceſſary, antecedent to the Decree; not neceſſary becauſe decreed onely, but therefore decreed becauſe neceſſary. *Acts* 15. 28. *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than theſe neceſſary things.* How far is the ſpirit and temper of modern Impoſers from that of the Apoſtles, who think good to impoſe upon us the inſupportable burthen of unneceſſary things!

2. That Council had the infallible guidance and ſuperintendency of

the Holy Spirit, (which is not inconſiſtent with the moſt ſerious deliberation) *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us.* But no National Church ever had any promiſe, and therefore cannot in Faith pray for, or expect ſuch immediate aſſiſtance, ſuch extraordinary direction. Let no Church aſſume equal power to impoſe, without an equal Commiſſion for ſuch power.

3. The private Chriſtians might reaſonably acquieſce in the Decree, becauſe it had their own conſent, antecedent to its making: A wonderful inſtance, and not to be parallel'd in latter Ages: *There*, the Holy Spirits authority, and the Churches conſent, go together; but *here*, we have neither: That burden will ſit the eaſier on our backs, which firſt has the approbation of our hearts; and ſuch was that Decree, not only ſent *to the Brethren*, ver. 23. but *by and from the Brethren. The Apoſtles and Elders, and Brethren, ſend greeting unto the Brethren which are of the Gentiles.* But this is not our Caſe, who have neither head, nor heart, nor hand, nor finger, in impoſing thoſe burdens, which it ſeems good to my Lords the Archbiſhops, and Biſhops, to lay upon us: nor do we know what load we muſt bear, till we feel it, no more than the poor Pack-horſe knows before hand, what it ſhall pleaſe his good Lord and Maſter to lay upon him.

4. That Decree was not to burden the Churches, but to eaſe them of thoſe burdens which they already groaned under. The Caſe was this, and it was ſad, and partly ours, *Certain men came down from* Judea, *and taught the Brethren, that except they were circumciſed after the manner of* Moſes, *they could not be ſaved*, ver. 1. Againſt this Tyranny *Paul* and *Barnabas*, the great Aſſertors of Chriſtian liberty, made vigorous oppoſition, *ver.* 2. but the Zealots having reinforced their Faction, from ſome of *the Sect of the Phariſees, who believed*, ver. 5. the Caſe comes before the Council, who determine againſt thoſe Bigots, that their blind zeal ſhould not be the meaſure *of neceſſary, and unneceſſary*, and yet not to exaſperate them too much, leſt perhaps they ſhould revolt from *Chriſt*, and apoſtatize to *Moſes*, (which they were now in a fair way to do, and ſome of them afterwards did) they agree to lay upon the Gentile Converts *no greater burthen than thoſe neceſſary things*, in oppoſition to thoſe other unneceſſary things, which the Judaizing Chriſtians contended for as neceſſary.

5. If we conſider *the things impoſed*, we ſhall find them none of thoſe Trifles, which the more pragmatical After-Ages divided the Churches with: *Abſtaining from meats offered to Idols, from blood, from things ſtrangled*,

led, and from fornication, ver. 25. Of which, *Fornication* was in its ſelf unlawful; *meats offered to Idols* (under that notion) were then, and are ſtill unlawful to be eaten; *things ſtrangled*, had preſcription and countenance from moſt Reverend Antiquity, againſt their uſe; and by *Blood*, ſome underſtand *Murther*, in which ſenſe that alſo was ſimply unlawful; but if *by Blood* be underſtood, *Fleſh with the life thereof which is the Blood*, Gen. 9. 4. that is, a limb taken from a living creature, and ſo eaten; to forbid that, was no more than to forbid them to be *Canibals*: and if thereby we will underſtand *Blood* in the moſt general acceptation, yet that alſo was ſo averſe to the *Jews*, that it's no wonder if the Church agreed to gratifie them in it. Nay, I have known (amongſt ſome others) a Reverend Dignitary of our Church, who from this Decree, and the Precepts given to the ſons of *Noah*, Religiouſly abſtained from all things ſtrangled, and from blood, to his dying day.

6. The end of that Decree, was to avoid *Scandal*; the morality of which, had it been well underſtood by theſe raw Gentile Converts, had taught them to deny themſelves in a greater matter than things ſtrangled, and blood, rather than give offence to their weak Brethren, without troubling the Church to make any Decree about them: And when this Canon was in its greateſt force and vigor, the Gentile Believers might have eaten the τὸ πνικτὸν, *privately*, yea, in *company*, where no offence would be given or taken; for what was the Jewiſh Convert concern'd what another ſhould eat at home, either of the μειδις, or fragments of heatheniſh Sacrifices, preſented to him by his Relations, or of thoſe things killed by ſuffocation? But alas! the Caſe is otherwiſe with us; for ſuch is the neceſſity of the Croſs, the white Garment, kneeling at the Supper, *&c.* That the omiſſion of them ſhall ſilence and ſuſpend a learned, faithful, laborious Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt *ab officio, & beneficio*, from his work and wages.

7. The Apoſtles add no penalty, neither pecuniary, corporal, or ſpiritual, to affright men into compliance with it; but contented themſelves to have commanded in the Name of Chriſt, and of his true Church; they made not *thoſe neceſſary things*, the conditions of *miniſterial, or lay-communion*; *Significavits*, Writs *de Excommunicato Capiendo*, were not then invented, nor till a long time after that the Lady Churches having loſt the true ſpiritual Sword, began to arm themſelves with ſecular power, to back and ſet an edge upon their Dictates.

8. This Decree was onely *negative*, not *poſitive*; a *reſtraint from* the uſe of ſome, but not an impoſition *of any*. It was onely, This you ſhall

not

not Do; not, This you *ſhall Do!* which kind of Canons are much eaſier than the other: Conſcience may better be tyed up *from acting in a hundred*, than forced to *act in one* particular. A negative precept reſtrains us from acting at any time, in any Caſe; an affirmative always obliges, but obliges not always to act in every Caſe: But things at home are much otherwiſe, where we are commanded both *what to do*, and *what not to do*; and are ſtill conſtrain'd to act, even in thoſe things we apprehend againſt the command of God either in general, or ſpecial.

9. Laſtly, It appears from the Apoſtle *Paul*'s After-writings, that when this Decree had a little gratified the Jewiſh Converts, weaned them a little from their old cuſtoms and uſages, whereof they were ſo tenacious, mollified their moroſe and rugged tempers, ſweeten'd and endear'd them towards the *Gentiles*, it expired of courſe, (as to what obligation it received from man) and lay among thoſe obſolete Canons, which were not regarded, becauſe antiquated; for when the reaſon of an humane Eccleſiaſtical Law ceaſes, the Law itſelf ceaſes, without any *formal Repeal*, which becauſe ſome expected ſhould have been more ſolemn, they will not be beaten out on't, but it's ſtill in force.

Thus have we ſeen the Vanity of the Doctor's Suppoſition, which he would perſuade us is the Apoſtles, *viz.* That *there was a neceſſity of one fixed and certain Rule, notwithſtanding the different attainments among Chriſtians*: Which I am not afraid to call *vain*, being ſo dark, that we neither know whether the Rule muſt be of Divine, or Humane Inſtitution, what the matter of it muſt be; nor is it proved by Reaſon, or any Scripture argument, but what is ultimately reſolved into that Decree made at *Jeruſalem*, which I have now fully ſhewn will do him nor his Cauſe any ſervice.

SECT.

SECT. III.

The Diſſenters Plea *from* Rom. 14. *and whether the Doctor hath ſpoken Reaſon to invalidate their Reaſonings from hence?*

THe Reverend Dr. having toiled hard to prove the neceſſity of a fixed ſtanding Rule, notwithſtanding the different attainments of Chriſtians about unneceſſary matters, and caught nothing to reward his pains, bethinks himſelf of an objection, that Diſſenters might poſſibly make, which he thus words for them: *Doth not the Apoſtle* in the 14th. Chapter of his Epiſtle to the *Rom. lay down quite another Rule?* viz. *only of mutual forbearance in ſuch Caſes where men are unſatisfied in Conſcience?* Yes, he doth ſo, and the ſame Rule he lays down in the verſe before the Drs. Text: *That if any were otherwiſe minded*, they ſhould wait, and not Act; the Church ſhould wait and not impoſe, but leave them to the inſtruction of God. To which the Dr. gives an intimation of a general anſwer: That there was a vaſt difference between the caſe as it ſtood then at *Rome*, and the caſe as it ſtood at *Philippi*: For, (ſayes he) *The Church of* Rome *conſiſted moſt of Jews, where they did not impoſe the neceſſity of keeping the Law on the gentile Chriſtians. —And therefore in this caſe he perſwades both parties to forbearance and charity.* But now, *in thoſe Churches* (ſuppoſe at *Philippi* for one) *where the falſe Apoſtles made uſe of the pretence of the Levitical Law being ſtill in force to divide the Churches, there the Apoſtle bids them beware of them and their practices, as being of a dangerous and pernicious conſequence: So that the preſerving the peace of the Church, and preventing ſeparation was the great meaſure, according to which the Apoſtle gave his Directions, and that makes him inſiſt ſo much on this adviſe to the* Philippians; *that whatever their attainments were, they ſhould walk by the ſame Rule, and mind the ſame things.*

I have often obſerved that when men are pinch't with plain Scripture, they uſe to twiſt and twine, and turn themſelves into all ſhapes, to get out of their ſtreights: and they have no more ordinary way of evaſion, than to fancy ſome imaginary various Caſes, upon which a various judgment muſt be made, and a various Rule laid down, to ſerve the preſent turn; which is moſt notorious in this anſwer. *The Apoſtle acted like a prudent governour,* (ſays he) *and in ſuch a manner, as he* thought *did tend moſt to the propagation of the Goſpel, and good of particular Churches:* To which

which ſome would reply; that then there are a great many in the world that have acted like fools: But my general anſwer is, that the Apoſtle acted upon higher Reaſons, than thoſe dictated to humane prudence, even the infallible guidance, and immediate direction of the Holy Ghoſt; Divine directions, and the ſupernatural counſels of the H. Spirit, are well conſiſtent; and had he only gone upon (*thinking*) as the Dr. fancies, I had rather have built my faith and practice, upon one of his *thinkings*, than upon one of the Drs. *full perſwaſions*, 1 Cor. 7. 40. *I think* alſo that I have the Spirit of God. And he was not deceived in *ſo thinking*. But for a particular anſwer.

§ 1. The Doctors Reaſon why *the Jewiſh profeſſors at* Rome *did not impoſe on the gentile Chriſtians, the neceſſity of keeping the Law of* Moſes, is this, Becauſe *we do not find they did ſo!* And is not this an ingenious courſe for a perſon of his learning to ſuppoſe the main foundation upon which he builds, the variety of the caſe, with no other proof, but that he does *not find it ſo*? I do not find a thouſand things that the ydid, and muſt be preſumed to have done, and may I thence conclude they never did 'em; and thence make what inferences, collections, and concluſions I think good?

§ 2. He aſſerts, that becauſe the *Apoſtle was willing to have the law buried with as little noiſe as might be, that therefore in this caſe, he perſwades both parties to forbearance and charity.* And what is that *other caſe*, or thoſe *other caſes* wherein the Apoſtle would diſpenſe with *forbearance and charity*? Are there any *ſelect and reſerved caſes* wherein he would have Chriſtians fall together by the ears? was it a duty at *Rome* not *to judge, and deſpiſe* one another? and will theſe be ſuch *Cardinal Virtues* at *Philippi*? or were they at *Rome* only to *ſtand or fall to their own Maſter* and muſt the poor wretches at *Philippi* be ſold for Galley-ſlaves? was it good Doctrine in one Church, that every man ſhould be *fully perſwaded in his own mind*, before he adventured upon acting? and was it Heterodox in the other, that they might debauch and proſtitute conſcience to all pretenders, and ſet their ſouls for every dog to piſs on? If the Doctor preſumed upon his Auditors, had he the ſame confidence to impoſe upon his Readers?

§ 3. The Church of *England* in her Canons of 1640. tells us ſhe *followed the Rule preſcribed by the Apoſtle* in this chapter to the *Romans*: and has 40. years more ſo altered the caſe? If the *Rule of Charity, preſcribed by the Apoſtle* to *Rome*, does reach us here in *England*, it's leſs matter whether it obliged them at *Philippi* or no; and yet that it obliged them alſo has been made clear from the Text.

§. 4.

§ 4. The Dr. manifeſtly prevaricates when he tells us; *The Apoſtle does ſo much inſiſt upon this advice to the* Phillippians, *that whatever their attainments were, they ſhould walk by the ſame Rule*, when the innocent Apoſtle inſiſts upon no ſuch thing! He commands (as I have oft obſerved) the clear contrary, that *different attainments* ſhould have different walkings and practices, that they are to walk as they *have attained*, and not as they *have not attained*: And that Rule to which the Apoſtle refers, that which he injoyns is a Rule that may be equally obſerved under different attainments as under the ſame: namely, that evangelical Rule of charity, which neither infringes chriſtian liberty, nor violates conſcience, but teaches us to exerciſe forbearance of one another, notwithſtanding our different attaintments, which is that *Royal Law*, commanded by the Apoſtle *James*, Jam. 2. 8. *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf.* Not to be repealed by all the authority on earth, nor ever will, by that of *Heaven.*

§ 5. If the Apoſtle *bids the Churches beware of thoſe who make uſe of the pretence of the Levitical Law being ſtill in force to divide the Churches*; He does alſo by parity of Reaſon bid us beware too of thoſe who upon pretence of any other Ceremonies, old Cuſtoms, and apocryphal uſages divide the Church, and render Communion with it grievous and burdenſom; and I hope we ſhall hearken to his advice, *to beware of them*, and truſt them no further than needs muſt; eſpecially when thoſe old cuſtoms have been found of ſuch *dangerous and pernicious conſequences*, that they have divided and almoſt ruined a moſt flouriſhing Church, and madeway for a common Enemy to break in with utmoſt fury upon us.

§ 6. If *the preſerving the Peace of the Church, and preventing ſeparation, was the great meaſure according to which the Apoſtle gave his Directions*; *Then* thoſe directions (or whatever they are called) that *diſturb the Churches Peace*, and give juſt *cauſe for ſeparation*, proceed by other meaſures; and it's time to look about us when we meet with ſuch as hazard that precious bleſſing of Peace upon ſuch Rules, Canons and Inſtitutions, as have almoſt, and (if not ſeaſonably prevented) will certainly deſtroy us.

SECT. IV.

Of the Obligation that lies upon Christians to walk by the same Rule. *The Doctor's two questions propounded. The former considered; but no answer to it given by him. Several preliminaries examined.*

THE Reverend Doctor having at length got over the flats, and bars, that lay at the mouth of the channel, is now hoising up his main Sail to the wind: And can we expect his discourse should run more naturally and smoothly? for having begg'd one half of the controversie, he may more easily borrow the rest of it. And therefore from *the obligation that lies upon Christians, to walk by the same Rule* (that is, *such a Rule as* he has made for the Apostle, and us) *There will arise* (saies he) *two very considerable Questions*: that is to say, where one absurditie is granted, *two more* (nay twenty) *will follow.*

1. Question. *How far the obligation doth extend to comply with an establisht Rule, and to preserve the Peace of the Church we live in?* This Question I confess is considerable, very considerable, had he told us *what the Rule establisht is*: for there are very crooked ones in the World; and who must be the *Rule maker*? for there are many pretenders; and then proved that we are to comply with it; but to enquire how far we are to comply, and not make it out, *that we are to comply at all*, to such Rules as he has contrived, is not so *considerable* as he would perswade us. And yet seeing the hare is started, I wish it were caught, and since he has propounded the question, it had been well if he had answered it, which we might demand in Justice, but shall take it for a special favour, if he will at any time hereafter, *tell us how far we are to comply with an establisht Rule.*

At present he cannot be at leisure; in the mean time, *for the preventing all misunderstanding the design of his Discourse, he desires us to consider*;

(1) That he *speaks not of the separation, or distinct communion* of whole Churches *from each other*: we are glad of that: First, because if he allow separation by *whole sale*, we shall do the better, if the *retail* trade be denyed: And secondly, because hereby the Churches of the dissenters will be

be out of the way his anger: for (as he adds) These whole Churches, *according to Scripture, Antiquity and Reason, have a just right and power to reform themselves:* If then the Churches of the dissenters be but true Churches, and whole Churches; If they have in them all the essentials of Churches; If they have pastors rightly qualified, duly chosen, the word of God purely preached, the Sacraments duly administred, and all other ordinances of Christ regularly used, they have then power to govern and reform themselves.

But *by whole Churches, he means the Churches of such nations which upon the decay of the Roman Empire resumed their just right of government to themselves, and upon their owning Christianity incorporated into one Christian society under the same common Ties, and Rules of Government.* To which I answer;

1. It's not material in this Case what Churches *he means*; for if they be true Churches of Christ, his *ill meaning* will not deprive them; if they be *not so*, his *good meaning will not give them a power to reform themselves.*

2. It may be quæried how those *Churches of the nations which separated from the Roman Empire*, came by this great priviledge *to reform and govern themselves*, more than others? for if it be an inherent power, and right, all Churches have it; *if not*, who could give it to some more than others?

3. We should be glad to see what right to *govern and reform themselves* was given by the *Scripture to national Churches*; (which yet the Doctor affirms) It had been very convenient to have proved their *Being* from Scripture, before he asserted their *right and power:* And it will make men admire, that the Scripture should give a right to such Churches as it never knew.

4. And if the Churches of those nations, that were incorporated into national Churches upon the decay of the Roman Empire, did by consent embody for their own preservation, it can hardly be believed, that they design'd their own destruction; that is, that those particular Churches should grant a power to National Ecclesiastical Governours that would deprive them of that power that they had within themselves: For as it cannot be imagined that ever any number of families would embody to set a civil Governour over them, and entrust him with a power that would destroy propriety, or take away paternal authority, or the just power of Masters over Servants; so neither can we suppose in a dream, that particular Churches should agree to unite in such a national frame, as should destroy the power of the Pastors and Elders of the particular assemblies, so as they should be but the Curates, and their Churches but Chappels of

eaſe to the Cathedrals, and Biſhops, which were prudential Creatures, erected meerly by their own conſent.

5. To ſay *that the Church of* Macedonia *would have been* National, *if from being a Roman province, it had become a Chriſtian Kingdom*, is to ſay thus much and no more: That there would have been a national Church in *Macedonia*, but for a ſmall inconvenience, that there was none.

6. And to ſay, *that the ſeveral Churches of the* Lydian, or proconſular Aſia *would have been a* National Church, *if they had been united in one Kingdom, and governed by the ſame authority under the ſame Rules*: is to ſay, juſt *as much*, that is, *nothing* or nothing to the purpoſe: for the uniting of ſeveral Churches under one Prince, who governs them by the ſame Authority and Rules, will not make one Church.

7. And what ſtrange kind of Churches were they, *who having aſſumed their juſt right of Government, did then own Chriſtianity*, and then incorporate into one Church? where had they their juſt right of Government, before their owning of Chriſtianity?

8. And if theſe particular Churches of Nations, had power to incorporate into one National Church; then the *particular Churches* are of Chriſts inſtitution, and theſe *National Churches* only prudential contrivances for common ſecurity: and then it will follow that the National could have no power but what was freely given them by the particular Churches, which cannot be imagined was ever given to their own Annihilation, or rendring them meerly titular; and perhaps they may reſume their right, when as weighty reaſons do appear for the reſumption, as ever there were for their reſignation.

9. And if theſe particular Churches have ſo far devolved all the intrinſick power which Chriſt veſted them with, upon the National frame, and conſtitution, that they cannot now govern themſelves, reform themſelves, or exert the power which they ſometimes had and enjoyed; then have they unchurched themſelves, and remain only ſo much matter without form; and then it can be no ſchiſm to ſeparate from them, ſince all corruptions among them muſt be immortal when they have fooliſhly quitted the power of reforming themſelves, except the National Church pleaſes.

This word Church, has made a great noiſe in the world, and we hear every moment, what wonders, what miracles the Church can do: Now there's a natural curioſity in all men to ſee that perſon or thing that boaſts of this wonder-working power, and accordingly, we would gladly be acquainted with this body called Church: To ſatisfie our Humour, the Doctor tells us, *That the true Notion of a Church, is no more than a ſociety*

of

of men united together for their order, and government, according to the Rules of the Chriſtian Religion: which deſcription I perceive marvelouſly edifies all that hear it: For a Parliament is a ſociety of men, and of men united, and united for their order and government, and truly I believe according to the Rules of the Chriſtian Religion. *Quære* now, *whether the Parliament of* England, *be not the Church of* England.

I humbly conceive the Doctor fell aſleep in the next words; *It's a great miſtake* (ſays he) *to make a Church barely to relate to Acts of Worſhip; and conſequently that the true Notion of a Church, is an Aſſembly for Divine Worſhip*: For never certainly was any ſo bereaved of common ſenſe, as to aſſert that this is the adæquate Notion of a Church. It had been civil to have quoted ſome one obſcure Nonconformiſt, that in ſome Book which none ever read but the Doctor, has aſſerted ſuch an Abſurdity. We ſay that the Publick Worſhip of God is one of the Ends of uniting into a Church Society, but not the onely End; and to exclude *Worſhip*, (as the Doctor ſeems to do in his deſcription) is as bad, if not worſe, than to exclude Diſcipline and Government: But we agree that Worſhip is not the onely End, there muſt be Government, Diſcipline exerciſed in every Church; what will the Doctor gain by all this, but that our Parochial Churches are not true Churches? And when the Doctor ſays further, *There muſt be ſome other Bond to unite Churches*, (ſome other beſides Worſhip) I cannot enough admire at the abſurdity of the expreſſion, ſeeing Worſhip is not the Bond, but the End of Union.

It has been familiar with this Reverend and Learned Perſon, having been employ'd in more important Controverſies, either to miſtake, or miſrepreſent the Notions and Principles of the Diſſenters: for ſo I find him, *Anſw. to ſeveral Treatiſes*, p. 180, 181. laying this down *as a fundamental Principle (of thoſe who ſeparate from the Church of* England) *as to Worſhip, (wherein the difference lies) that nothing is lawful in the Worſhip of God, but what he has expreſly commanded*: And at the bottom of the ſame Page, he repeats the ſame thing, with the ſame confidence; wherein the Doctor treads in the ſteps of *Archbiſhop Whitgift*, (and he muſt tread in his ſteps if ever he reach *Lambeth*) who in his anſwer to the Admonition, does charge the Puritans to hold, That nothing was lawful in Worſhip, but what was expreſly commanded in the Word of God; upon no better ground, than that the Admonition had ſaid, nothing is lawful in Worſhip, but what God has commanded. To this Mr. *Cartwright* replies, *Is this to interpret mens words? Are theſe Phraſes equipollent,* [*Commanded, and expreſly commanded?*] *Many things are forbidden, many things commanded, which are neither* expreſly *commanded, or forbidden. We ſay*

not,

not, no Ceremony, no Order, no Diſcipline is lawful in the Church, but *what is expreſly found in the Word of God; but that men may* not act arbitrariouſly, *that they are bound to conform themſelves to the general Rules of the Scripture, which are given forth as a Rule by which to ſquare all Religious matters.* Thus far Mr. *Cartwright.* And ſo do we openly and freely own that direct, immediate conſequence from Scripture, or whatever is included in the general Rules of Scripture ſhall conclude and determine us in theſe diſputes.

Here again the Doctor thinks he has gravelled us with an unanſwerable queſtion.

If (ſaies he) *it be mutual conſent, and agreement which makes a Church, why then may not national Societies agreeing together in the ſame faith, and under the ſame government, and diſcipline be as truly, and properly a Church, as any particular Congregation?* I will tell him why, if he pleaſe to hear me out with patience. 1. Becauſe it is not mutual conſent and agreement and alone in the general, but ſuch agreement, and conſent as the Goſpel warrants, which we have for particular Churches, which were well known to the Scriptures, but not for National, to which conſtitution, the Scriptures are perfect ſtrangers. 2. Becauſe the end of that conſent and agreement muſt be conſidered, and looked at; which is union for worſhip, though not for worſhip alone, to which end national union ſignifies nothing, ſeeing that a National Church (unleſs it be a Church no larger than the Kingdom of *Ivetot*) can never meet together for that end. 3. Becauſe the particular Churches muſt conſent to nothing that may deſtroy their own government, and power of reforming whatever corruptions by length of time ſteal and creep in among them: But if his meaning be, that they may be *called a Church*, it's little to us, what he ſhall pleaſe to call them, ſeeing we do not intend to draw the Saw of contention about the Nomenclature of that or any other Body.

From reaſoning, the Doctor proceeds to *wondring at thoſe who cannot tell what is meant by the Church of* England; and he will inform their ignorance concerning it: *We mean* (ſaies he) *That ſociety of Chriſtian people which in this Nation are united under the ſame profeſſion of faith, the ſame laws of government, and Rules of divine worſhip.* Whence it will follow that the Churches of diſſenters are each of them the *Church of England*: For every one of them is, 1. *A ſociety of Chriſtian people*; though perhaps in his judgment but bad ones, yet as good as their Neighbours. 2. *They are in this Nation*; though full ſore againſt ſome mens wills; who would have

have them removed by *Capital punishments or banishment.* 3. They are united under the same profession of faith: that is, one half of them are not *Socinians or Arminians* and the other half *Calvinists.* 4. *They are united under the same laws of Government.* 5. And they have *the same Rules of divine worship*: And then it follows too by the Doctor's concession, they have a right of governing each Church its own self, and of reforming errors in Doctrine, and corruptions in worship.

Notwithstanding this famous definition, what man is the wiser, or knows more than he did before *what the Church of* England *is*? For, 1. We understand not by this Description, who is the visible head of this Church; whether a *civil or ecclesiastical person*, and by consequence are at a loss whether the Church may be called *a civil or ecclesiastical constitution.* 2. We are not informed how this National Church became so united; whether they were driven together by violence, or drew together by their consent; whether it was not some storm or tempest that might jostle them all on a heap, or whether the consent of the particular Congregations was asked, and obtained in order to this coalition: We have seen some Churches in this nation, that have had their Pastors torn from them, and the Sheep scattered; strangers obtruded upon others, whose persons they knew not, whose ministerial gifts they had no trial of, and all his right to them was, that he was nominated by a certain Gentleman called the Patron, and the institution of the Diocesan, and if with their consent it was such a one as was obtained by duress; and do well call this uniting; what was it then which united them? why some of the Ministers of the Parochial Churches met together, and chose one or two out of their number, and sent them up to a convocation, and these meeting with some others, they call Archbishops, and Bishops, Deans, *&c.* agreed upon a national Church-frame, without the least consent of many of the particular Churches. And this is the too much boasted Union.

(2) Another thing he would have us consider, is, He does *not intend to speak of the Terms upon which persons are to be admitted to the exercise of the function of the Ministry, but of the Terms of Lay-communion.* And it was advisedly done; for if it be so difficult to render Lay-communion practicable, what will it be to justifie all those terms upon which Ministers are admitted to the function of the Ministry, or the exercise of it? But why does he mention *the exercise of the function*, and *not the function* it self? Do they use to ordain Ministers to a Ministerial work, and then prohibit them to exercise the work of their ministry till further order? Must men pay for an *Order to Act*, and then be put to purchase another order

order that they may act according to their order? surely one of these fees might have been saved, and it might have been sufficient either to buy a License to preach without ordination, or an ordination to preach without a License: The Country Chancellors are more merciful, who do not usually, that I hear of, sell a man a License to marry, and then Compel him to take another License to lie with his Bride.

It is confessed that the Terms upon which Ministers are admitted to their function, and the exercise of it, are more severe than those upon which the Laity (as they love to call them) are admitted to communion in the word and Sacraments; and there might be reason for it, seeing the Laity held no good fat Parsonages, that might tempt any to eject them: But yet the Terms are not such easie things of digestion, but they lie upon the stomachs of thousands to this day, and some of them are as hard to swallow as the biggest gobblets that are imposed upon the Clergy; and they are apt to think that the same terms that are imposed upon their Pastors, are imposed upon themselves by consequence, seeing they approve interpretatively their Ministers subscriptions, their declarations, their oaths, by owning them for their Pastors, whom they know upon such terms to have been assigned to them; nor do they love to have him for their Pastor whom they know to be of a different Religion from theirs: But here are some particulars, wherein the Reader will desire the Doctor's ingenuity, and that plainness which became a sermon.

1. He asserts *that there has been a great deal of art used to confound these two*; this I say is not honest dealing; for they that Judge parochial Lay-communion lawful, and have the greatest latitude that way, have from Press and Pulpit sufficiently proclaimed their minds; and they that judge otherwise have by their own practice and example sufficiently declared their judgment, unless the Doctor be angry that they do not fill up their publick worship with declamations against Ceremonies; and they that have made the nearest approaches to Parochial Communion, have found such bad treatment, that they are tempted to judge, the Clergy are more afraid of their coming wholly in, than keeping out of the Church, and they are to be allowed the fittest judges in this case, because they know best what stock the Church-commons will bear: In the mean time they may take warning how they approach too near that flame which has already singed some of their wings, and may possibly consume their whole bodies, but conscientious men are above those considerations.

2. The Doctor tells us, *that in the Judgment of the most impartial among the dissenters, little is to be said on the behalf of the people from whom none of those things are required.* None of these things? what, not to dedicate

dicate their Children to God by the ſign of the croſs? not to kneel at the Sacrament? I am ſure the Canons of 1603. have declared (*Can.* 30.) *that in memory of the Croſs, and other Reaſons, the Church of* England *hath thought meet to retain the ſign of the Croſs in baptiſm, taking it for a ſymbol,* whereby the Infant *is devoted or dedicated to the ſervice of him who dyed the death of the Croſs*: This is the true import of that Canon, which I cannot now give the Reader the Engliſh of *Verbatim*, having only by me a Latine Copy of thoſe Canons. And thoſe of the moſt impartial among the diſſenters, and ſuch as have come neareſt to conformity in their Lay-Capacity, will tell you that there are ſome things which even they in their private ſtation cannot comply withall.

3. The Doctor *does not underſtand, how they can preach lawfully to a people who commit a ſin in hearing them.* Either then the things are unintelligible, or the Dr. is not that man of underſtanding we have always taken him for: what the *Diviſions of Reuben* were, he does not well underſtand, p. 2. *Why many Cities united under one civil government, and the ſame Rules of Religion, ſhould not be called one national Church, he cannot underſtand*, p. 19. *And if occaſional Communion be lawful, that conſtant Communion ſhould not be a duty, is hard to underſtand*, p. 56. And now here *how they can preach lawfully to a people, who commit a fault in hearing them, he does not underſtand.* But what great difficulty lies in this? Some do ſin though they hear, and yet not ſin becauſe they hear; or there may be a ſin in the hearer, and yet no ſin in hearing; but whatever the tempers or diſtempers, the ends and deſigns of the hearers are, that which juſtifies the Miniſters preaching is his own call to the Miniſtry, not the qualification of the hearers: A man may come from the next pariſh to hear the Doctor, when by the Rules of the Church he ſhould have been in his own pariſh Church, and yet the Doctor will not think that this ſuperſedes the exerciſe of his Miniſtry. Some may come out of cuſtom becauſe they have uſed to trundle thither down the hill; others out of curioſity to hear a perſon of whom fame has ſpoken ſo much; others out of a carping humour to pick quarrels, as no doubt Prieſts, and Jeſuites have done, and yet the Doctor ſatisfies himſelf, that it is his duty to do his Maſters work, and however they hear ſinfully, ſchiſmatically, captiouſly, yet he is acquitted in his miniſterial ſervice.

(3) The Doctor tells us, he does *not conſound bare ſuſpending Communion in ſome particular Rites, with either total, or at leaſt ordinary forbearance of Communion in what they judge lawful, and proceeding to the forming of ſeparate Congregations.* What great matter is it to us, or to the contro-

verſie, what the Doctor ſhall pleaſe to confound, or to diſtinguiſh? The law of the nation, which is the aſſigned Rule and Reaſon of Conformity, requires total Conformity to all Rites. The Law conſiders not whether mens *ſcruples be modeſt, or immodeſt*, nor what they judge lawful or unlawful; Conformity is exacted to the whole Liturgy, Ceremonies, and the Laity muſt not pick and chuſe what they can uſe, and refuſe the reſt; they muſt like Travellours on the King's high way, keep to the road, and not break out here and there to eſcape the foul way: If the Doctor were the Church of *England*, or the Parliament, it were conſiderable, but as the caſe ſtands, we are under a peremptory law: Now then, if there be ſome things which we do ſcruple, and not only ſcruple, but upon the moſt impartial ſcrutiny we can make, do judge ſinful, and theſe be made the condition of enjoying one Sacrament, or other Ordinance of Chriſt, and that by a law of his as peremptory as any of theſe of men, and impoſed upon a far more ſevere penalty than man can inflict, we are bound to live in the conſtant uſe of all his inſtitutions; we muſt unite our ſelves to thoſe churches where we may enjoy them upon better terms.

Thus much in conſideration of his conſiderations: But yet we are to ſeek for the anſwer to the Queſtion: *How far we are obliged to comply with an eſtabliſht Rule?* Separation of whole Churches is ſhut out of the Queſtion; Miniſterial Conformity is ſhut out of the Queſtion; Suſpending Communion in ſome particular Rites is ſhut out of the Queſtion; But where is the anſwer to the Queſtion? That is adjourned or prorogued, or utterly loſt, and therefore *if any honeſt Gentleman or Citizen has taken up the anſwer to this queſtion, loſt between St.* Pauls *and the* Guild-Hall Chappel, *let him reſtore it to the owner, and he will be well rewarded for his pains.* And now let the Reader judge, whether the diſſenters are not likely to be well inſtructed by a Catechiſm, made up of Queſtions without Anſwers?

SECT. V.

The ſtate of the preſent Controverſie between the diſagreeing Parties, (as laid down by the Doctor) *what Conceſſions ſome Diſſenters make, and what uſe the Doctor makes of them?*

THE former Queſtion being laid by at preſent, he comes to *conſider the preſent Caſe of Separation, and to make the ſinfulneſs and miſchief*

chief of it appear: And this is it, which denominates the Diſcourſe, *The Miſchief of Separation:* Though to an impartial Conſiderer, how loth they are to ſtep over a ſtraw, or to forgo the leaſt of their Impoſitions, which have made the Separation, it might better have been ſtiled, *The Miſchief of Union.* Now to do this, (as he thinks more convincingly) he will firſt lay down ſome *Conceſſions.* It had been a more convincing method in the judgment of moſt Men, if he had proved Separation ſinful from Scripture grounds, rather than from ſome Mens Conceſſions, ſeeing I do not underſtand either that we are bound to ſtand to their Conceſſions, or that the Conceſſions themſelves will do his Cauſe the leaſt ſervice: And they themſelves have been ſo bang'd by the *Papiſts* by this *Argumentum ad hominem*, that one would think they ſhould have little comfort to uſe it. We cannot forget how in the Relation of the Conference between the A. B. *Laud*, and the Jeſuite, the *Lady* who gave occaſion to the Diſpute, asked this Queſtion, *Whether a Perſon living and dying in Communion with the Church of* Rome, *might be ſaved?* His *Grace* anſwered affirmatively. Now what Triumphs before the Victory the *Papiſts* have made upon this Conceſſion, the Doctor has ſufficient cauſe to underſtand: *You* (ſay they) *confeſs that Salvation is attainable in Communion with us:* we peremptorily deny it, *That Salvation may be had in your Communion*; And therefore the ſafeſt way is, to hold Communion there where both ſides agree Salvation may be attained. This Argument from that Conceſſion is much ſtronger, than one drawn from the Conceſſion of any one or many amongſt us; becauſe we own no learned Men to be our Eccleſiaſtical Head, as that Archbiſhop was ſuppoſed to have been theirs. But thus fared it with them for their Charity to *Rome*, and thus fares it with us for our Charity to them; they cannot own *Rome* to be a true Church, and that perſons in that Communion may be ſaved, but they muſt hear on't on both ſides of their ears; why then did you ſeparate from a true Church, wherein you might have been ſaved? Nor muſt we grant the Church of *England* to be a true Church, but preſently we are pelted with the ſame Reply that was thrown at their heads, why then did you ſeparate? But we had rather ſuffer by our Charitableneſs, and their Uncharitableneſs, than admit any the leaſt Temptation to deny the Church of *England* to be a true Church, and to hold all the eſſential Points of Faith, ſeeing the Doctor himſelf has granted as much as this comes to, where he allows of Separation; yet let us hear what theſe Conceſſions are.

§ 1. *They unanimouſly confeſs they find no fault with the Doctrinal Articles of our Church.* Doctrinal Articles? Are there then any *Articles*

that are not *Doctrinal*? Every Article contains, as I always thought, some Doctrine or other; and which then are the Non-doctrinal Articles? more particularly,

1. It is not true, that the Dissenters unanimously confess they find no fault with the Doctrine of the Church; for I am confident none of them but do find fault with that Doctrine, *That Children baptized, and dying before the commission of actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.* And that other, *That whosoever believeth not stedfastly all that is contained in the Athanasian Creed, cannot be saved, but shall perish everlastingly.*

2. They do not believe all the Articles of the Thirty nine, and particularly not the 20th, of the Churches power to impose *Rites* and *Ceremonies*; and that also is a Doctrinal Article.

3. But if by *Doctrinal Articles* be intended no more, than those that relate to the *essential Points of saving Faith*, it's true they find no fault with them, but then it's as true, that the Doctor has confest also, That the Church of *Rome* maintains all such Articles, and yet he justifies the Separation from their Communion; whence it will unavoidably follow, that it is lawful to separate from a Church which holds all the essential Points of Faith absolutely necessary to salvation.

4. And what is it to the Laity, what Doctrinal Articles are contained in the Book compiled 1562. if the contrary Doctrines be now openly preached in those Parochial Churches to which their adherence is required? For if their Communion with the Parish Churches be the thing which he mainly insists on, it's of more concern to them what is there preach'd, than what Faith they were of an hundred years ago.

§ 2. *They generally yield, that our Parochial Churches are true Churches, and it is with these their Communion is required.* And are not then the Parochial Churches more beholden to the Dissenters, than to the Doctor, whose Principles do deny them to be true Churches? For so he tells us, p. 27. That although when the Churches encreased, the occasional meetings were frequent in several places, yet still there was but one Church, and one Altar, and one Baptistry, and one Bishop: So that the Parochial Congregations are but occasional meetings, members and appurtenances of the Cathedral, Chappels of Ease under the Mother Church, but no true Churches, because each has not its proper Bishop: And so they make the Diocesan Bishop the onely Pastor, and the Parochial Teachers to be onely his Curates, to ease them of the trouble and cumber of Preaching. And some have observed a strange Innovation in the very office of the Minister of late years; for whereas in the old Ordination of Priests, they enstated them in their whole office, by reading that Text, *Acts* 20. 28.

Feed

Feed the Flock, whereof the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers, or Biſhops. This Text is now omitted, and Miniſters are ordain'd to preach when and where the Biſhops ſhall give them a Licence. And thus the Parochial Teachers are no Officers of Chriſt, but creatures of the Biſhops making; nor have they any Juriſdiction, any power of Government or Diſcipline in their hands, (which all thoſe Paſtors whom Chriſt appointed are veſted with) but ſerve to execute the Decrees, Sentences, and Awards of the Chancellors, Officials, and Commiſſaries, without liberty to interpoſe ſo much as a judgment of diſcretion: And though they retain the name of *Rectors*, yet 'tis rather a footſtep of what once originally they were, but not any term that carries or imports in it any real Authority. And what if the Diſſenters do not deny that you have all the Eſſentials of true Churches, true Doctrine, true Sacraments, and an implicit Covenant between Paſtors and People? Do not alſo our great Clergymen own and allow, that *Rome* hath all theſe? The Doctor, I am certain, allows them to be true Churches, to have all the Eſſentials of true Churches, and that they have true Sacraments too; elſe why are not they re-baptized which from *Rome* are converted, and brought over to the Church of *England*? And true Miniſters, elſe why are they not re-ordained, who, after reconciliation, are allowed to exerciſe their Miniſterial Function? when yet a Miniſter ordained by the Reformed Churches, ſhall not enjoy that priviledge, meerly for want of Epiſcopal Ordination. And will the Doctor deny that they have the Euchariſt in all its eſſential parts, though they have ſuperadded many groſs Corruptions? as they have many Errors in the Doctrine of Faith, which yet does not in his judgment, deſtroy the eſſential points of the Chriſtian Doctrine.

(3) *Many of them declare that they hold Communion with our Churches to be lawful.* And then 1. Who is the true Catholick Chriſtian, and who is the real Schiſmatick? He that holds Communion with all Proteſtant Churches occaſionally lawful, and accordingly holds Communion with them actually as Providence gives him opportunity; or he that denying all Churches to be truly ſuch, except his own, refuſes Communion with them, for want of a Ceremony or two, and the neceſſary conſequence of a Ceremony, A Biſhop? 2. That they hold Communion with this Church to be lawful, is one of thoſe dubious Propoſitions which will do the conceding Party no harm, nor them that make uſe of it any ſervice. *Firſt*, many of them declare ſo, and many declare otherwiſe; but they do neither of them prejudge the other, nor intend to bind them to their private ſentiments: and it's as good an argument to prove Communion unlawful, becauſe many declare againſt it, as 'tis to prove it lawful, becauſe many

many declare for it. *Secondly*, they declare Communion lawful, but do they declare total Communion lawful? The same persons will tell us, that both these Propositions are true, Communion is lawful, and Communion is unlawful; Communion in some parts of worship is so, in others not: And *thirdly*, they will further tell us, that Communion with some Parish-Churches is lawful, with others unlawful; that there are not the same Doctrines preached, the same Ceremonies urged, the same rigid terms of Communion in all Churches exacted. And lastly, that occasional Communion is or may be lawful, where a stated and fixed Communion is not so; and they give this reason for their judgment and practice, because to hold Communion with one Church, or sort of Christians, exclusively to all others, is contrary to their true Catholick principles, which teach them to hold Communion, though not equally, with all tolerable Churches; and that there are some things tolerable which are not eligible, wherein they can bear with much for peace-sake, but chuse rather to sit down ordinarily with purer administrations.

It is a dangerous thing to give us uncertain ambulatory Notions of Schism, other than what the Scripture has given us, both because the Scriptures alone can inform us what is the Notion of a true Church, and by consequence what must be the true Notion of sinful Separation from it; and because these unstable mutable Notions of Schism, will make that to be Schism in one Countrey, which is an innocent thing in another; and that to be Schism one year, which perhaps the next may prove a good and Catholick practice. That was Schism in *England* in *Edward* the 6th's days, which was not so in Queen *Maries*; and that was Schism in Her Reign, which became none in the days of Her Successor. And we may be Schismaticks here in *England*, when if we cross the water we shall be none, though we practise the same Worship, and retain all that which at home would have fastened that brand upon us. And if we travel through *Germany*, though perhaps we cannot be Schismaticks and Catholicks twice a day, because the miles are very long, yet may we be both backwards and forwards forty times in a Twelvemonth, and continue the same men both in principle and practice that we were when we went our pilgrimage.

It is little to our purpose, what the Doctor is pleased to tell us, what one told him, *viz.* that *An. Dom.* 1663. *Divers Preachers met at* London, *to consider how* far it was lawful, or their duty *to communicate with the Parish-Churches, where they lived, in the Liturgy and Sacraments:* or that 20 *Reasons were brought in to prove, that it is a duty in some persons, to join with some Parish-Churches three times a year in the Lord's Supper:* For, 1. If they consider'd *how far it was lawful:* I hope they spoke something

thing at leaſt to the Queſtion, and left it not as they found it, a Queſtion forſaken of its Anſwer, which ought to be individual Companions. 2. They met to conſider what was lawful for, or a duty to *themſelves*, not for or to others in whoſe names they had no commiſſion to hear and determine the Queſtion. 3. If they inquired *how far it was lawful, or a duty*; they ſuppoſed that it was not unlimitedly ſo, for to what end ſhould they inquire how far they might go, if they had once thought they could go through? 4. And the deſign of the twenty reaſons abundantly proves it; for it was but *ſome perſons*, whoſe duty it was adjudged to be to receive the Sacrament thrice a year, and it was but in ſome pariſhes neither, where thoſe *ſome perſons* might communicate, ſo that there might be ſome others, many others, poſſibly the greateſt number, whoſe duty it was not ſo to joyn; and other ſome pariſhes, many others, and and poſſibly the greateſt number with whom it was not lawful or not a duty to hold Communion. The Caſe then is this, a Chriſtian may be placed in ſuch circumſtances, that he may receive the Sacrament from ſome perſons who will indulge him in the queſtionable Terms, in ſuch places where he cannot enjoy that ordinance at all if he do not receive it there; and thus with many reſtrictions, limitations, diſtinctions and clauſes a Caſe may be put, wherein the twenty reaſons may conclude ſome thing, but yet nothing to the Doctors advantage: But what effect, what operation had theſe twenty reaſons upon the Company? Why! *none of them ſeemed to diſſent*, that is, they did not enter their ſeveral proteſtations, nor formally declare againſt the Reaſons of their Brother; like wiſe and wary perſons, they would adviſe upon them: They came to conſider of the lawfulneſs of Communion, and they would go away and conſider of the ſtrength of the Reaſons propounded to convince them. I ſee it's more dangerous than I had thought it to have been, to come into the pariſh Churches, leſt naked preſence, and ſilent appearing in thoſe aſſemblies, ſhould be brought againſt us, as an interpretative approbation of whatſoever is there done or ſpoken.

The Doctor adds, that they had *ſuch another meeting after the plague and fire*, (and if it were but *ſuch another*, there was no great harm in't) *at which they agreed that communion with our Church was in it ſelf lawful and good*; for which he quotes *Plea for Peace*. p. 240. But here the Doctor is tardy by his favour, and wrongs his Relator manifeſtly, by nibbling off the laſt and moſt conſiderable words of the ſentence---*viz. when it would do no more harm than good:* And we believe it lawful in that Caſe to hold Communion with any Church in the world, ſo that now we muſt come to another enquiry, and ſtart a new queſtion, when there are

one.

one or two already up before the Dogs, viz. *whether Communion with the Pariſh-Churches will do more harm than good?* which it will certainly do, 1. When ſuch Communion ſhall perſuade the Pariſh-Churches, that their Frame is *eligible*, and not only *tolerable*; that they are *righteous*, and *need no repentance*; *pure*, as well as *true Churches of Chriſt*, and need no Reformation. 2. When that Communion ſhall be ſo managed, that the perſons communicating muſt be obliged to ſeparate from all other Churches, which they judge to be of a purer mold, and wherein they may enjoy all Chriſt's Ordinances with much greater, and clearer ſatisfaction to their Conſciences, and more notable advantages for edification. 3. When ſuch Communion ſhall viſibly harden the *Papiſts* in their ſuperſtitious uſages; As *kneeling at the Sacrament, bowing before Altars, Churches, the Eaſt*, and at the word *Jeſus*, has apparently done; and ſo much *T. G.* the Doctor's grand Antagoniſt, has profeſſed in his Diſpute about Idolatry. 4. When ſuch Communion and Conformity ſhall notably prejudice the Chriſtian Religion in general; and that this would have been the effect of an univerſal Conformity, was well expreſs'd by a *Conformable Miniſter* of good Note in the Church, who told his Friend, a Captain in His Majeſties Service, *That he was heartily glad that ſo many Miniſters had refus'd to Conform upon the Terms propoſed.* And being ask'd with ſome wonderment, a reaſon of his ſtrange expreſſion, he anſwer'd thus: (Not that thereby they had more good Livings to ſcramble for, as one anſwer'd;) *Had all Conform'd, the People would have thought there had been nothing in Religion; that it had been onely a thing to talk of in the Pulpit, to ſerve a State deſign; but now by throwing up their Livings, and expoſing themſelves and Families to outward ruine, rather than Conform to the things impoſed, not agreeable (as they apprehend) to the Goſpel they had preached, they have convinced the world, there is a Reality in Religion, and thereby given a check to Atheiſm.*

To ſhut up this Diſcourſe; If the Doctor would have us Conform *as far as we judge it lawful*, when ſuch Compliance is cloathed with all its particular circumſtances, we are willing to it, provided the Doctor can ſecure us, that ſuch Compliance ſhall be accepted in full ſatisfaction of the debt. But we doubt it muſt not be the *Dean of St.* Paul's, but *the Convocation* there, that muſt aſſign the Limits, Bounds, Terms and Meaſures of our Conformity. If hearing a Sermon, as we have occaſion, and going as much further as Conſcience warranted by the Word will permit us, would excuſe us from being reviled, and railed at as Schiſmaticks, Rebels, Traytors, and what not, would do it, it would be done, nay, it is done; but if he has no Commiſſion to treat with us, and compound the matter, I fear

fear he has ſpoiled the Wit and Ingenuity of his late Allegory, and fought a Skirmiſh without the Command of his General; for though he ſtand upon very high Ground, he ſtands not as yet on the higheſt, and *there are higher than he.*

SECT. VI.

The Grounds of the preſent Separation, aſſigned by the Doctor, Examined and Cleared.

THE main Queſtion, ſo ſolemnly propounded by the Reverend Doctor, having given us the ſlip, we are entertained with another; *What are the Grounds of the preſent Separation?* and the utmoſt he can find in the beſt Writers of the ſeveral Parties amounts but to theſe two;

1. *That although they are in a State of Separation from the Church, yet this Separation is not Schiſm.* And he courteouſly ſuppoſes them to have *one Reaſon* for this Principle, from the Author of *Evangelical Love*, p. 68. *Our Lord* Chriſt *Inſtituted only Congregational Churches, or particular Aſſemblies for Divine Worſhip, which having the ſole Church-power in themſelves, they are under no Obligation of Communion with other Churches, but only to preſerve Peace and Charity with them*; and from the Author of *The true and only way of Concord.* p. 111. *That to deviſe* new Species of Churches (*beyond Parochial, or Congregational*) *without God's Authority, and to impoſe them on the World* (*yea in his Name*) *and call all Diſſenters Schiſmaticks, is a far worſe uſurpation than to make and Impoſe new Ceremonies.* This is all the reaſon the Doctor can find to juſtifie their Separation to be no Sin: But does the vaſt weight of their Cauſe hang upon one ſingle ſtring? I can ſhew him where he may find more aſſigned by the Author of *Evangelical Love*, whom he quotes. 1. *That there are many things in all Parochial Churches that openly ſtand in need of Reformation, which theſe Parochial Churches neither do, nor can, nor have power to Reform.* And who would joyn with them, that have no power to Reform themſelves? 2. *Many things in the conſtant total Communion of Parochial Churches are impoſed on the Conſciences and Practices of men, which are not according to the mind of* Chriſt. And will *Chriſt* Condemn them for Schiſmaticks, who are ready to come up to his Commands, becauſe they dare advance no further? 3. That *there is no Evangelical Church-Diſcipline adminiſtred in ſuch Parochial Churches, which yet is a neceſſary means unto the Edification of the Churches appointed by Chriſt*

himself. And are they Schismaticks who separate not from, but to, any of Christ's means for their Edification? 4. *The Rule and Government which such Parochial Churches are under (in the room of that which ought to be in and among themselves)* viz. *by Bishops-Courts, Chancellors, Commissaries, is unknown to the Scriptures*: And are they Schismaticks who refuse an unscriptural, for a Scriptural Rule and Government? 5. *There is a total Deprivation of the Peoples Liberty to chuse their own Pastors, whereby they are deprived of all use of their Light and Knowledge, for providing for their own Edification.* And it's hard that men shall be made Schismaticks because they would use their Reasons: that is, unless they will be something *worse than Men*, they cannot be *good Christians.* 6. That *there is a want of due means of Edification in many of those Parochial Congregations, and yet none shall be allowed to provide themselves better.* And is it not very severe, for Christians to be Damned, because they would be more certainly and easily Saved? Thus then we see there are other, many other, Reasons alledged to justifie such Separation to be no Schism, though it pleased the Doctor to wink at them, and Assign only this one, which yet it's well if he can Confute.

In order to which He thinks, That *to clear the practice of Separation from being a Sin, two things are necessary to be done.*

§ 1. *To prove that a Christian has no obligation to external Communion beyond a Congregational Church.* And is this the Duty incumbent upon them? They think they have done enough if they prove there's an Obligation lies upon them to hold external Communion in that Church whereof they are Members; and let others prove that they are obliged to Communion beyond those Bounds: If the Dissenters enlarge their Communion as far as Christ enlarged the Churches, let them who have enlarged the Bounds of the Churches prove it to be the Dissenters duty to widen their Communion to that Latitude. It's sufficient if they that hold this Principle can justifie it without confuting other mens Notions; and they Judge their own Principle and Practice sufficiently authorised from this one thing. Their Doctrine, Communion, and Ordinances have the same extent with those of the first Christians. Acts 2. 42. *Who continued in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, breaking Bread, and Prayer.* And let the opposers prove that any larger extent of Churches, than what answers these ends, is necessary, and they are ready to Conform themselves to it.

What the Doctor hath to say, or however what he hath said, will fall under these heads. (1.) *I have never seen any tolerable Proof that the Churches Planted by the Apostles were limited to Congregations:* To which more

more needs not be ſaid than that, 1. If the Churches planted by the Apoſtles were *in ſuch Congregations*; it's no matter to us whether they were *limited* to ſuch Congregations or no: If Congregational bounds be allowed, let other and larger bounds be proved by them that are concern'd to juſtifie them. 2. If ſuch particular Churches were not of Chriſts inſtitution; then it would be no Schiſm to ſeparate from them: I ſay no Schiſm of Chriſt's condemning, and if others will make other Notions of Schiſm, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles never knew, and ſo multiply ſin without cauſe, let them contrive a hell too wherein thoſe ſins, and ſchiſms ſhall be puniſhed.

(2) The Doctor proceeds, *It's poſſible at firſt there might be no more Chriſtians in one City, than could meet in one aſſembly for worſhip; but where doth it appear, that when they multiplied into more Congregations, they did make new and diſtinct officers, with a ſeparate power of government?* I confeſs I know not where any ſuch thing appears, that they made *new and diſtinct Churches*; that is, *ſpecifically new*, of *another kind, ſort, or ſpecies*; but that they did make *other Churches, and other Officers*, that is, *more Churches, and more Officers*, is made appear thus; that if they had not ſuch Officers, their aſſemblies had not anſwered their ends; and if they had not the *ſame power of Government* that the other Churches had, they had not been of the ſame kind, but quite another thing; but what it does not appear the *Apoſtles* did, it appears abundantly, the ſucceeding corrupter times have done, even to form *new Churches*, *new Officers* wholly diſtinct from thoſe inſtituted by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; and hence it was, that to keep Peace as is pretended amongſt the Paſtors of particular Churches, they found out *a Biſhop*, and to keep the Biſhops from falling together by the ears, they invented an *Archbiſhop*, and becauſe the Metropolitans might poſſibly quarrel, they inſtituted a *Patriarch*, and becauſe the Patriarchs were ſubject to the ſame paſſions with other men, prudence contrived a *Pope*, and clapt him upon them all, to keep them in *Decorum*.

(3) The Doctor thinks *it will not appear credible to any conſiderate man, that the* 5000 *in the Church of* Jeruſalem *made one ſtated and fixed Congregation for divine worſhip*. Things are credible or incredible, as ſome mens intereſts, and occaſions will have them, or elſe it were no ſuch hard matter to make it credible to the Doctor, that 5000, 10000, 20000, might make one ſtated and fixt Congregation for worſhip; he has an inſtance of it in St. *Andrews Holborn*, a place which he has cauſe to know contains more than 5000, and yet they have but *one ſtated, fixed Congregation for divine worſhip*.

(4) The Doctor thinks that *much more may be ſaid for limiting Churches to private families, than to particular Congregations:* Let us hear it then! *Do we not read of the Church in the houſe of* Priſcilla and Aquila? *Rom.* 16. 3, 5. *and of the Church that was in the houſe of* Nymphas *at* Coloſs? *Col.* 4. 15. *and in the houſe of* Philemon *in* Laodicea? *Philem.* 2, 3. yes! we do ſo, and yet hear nothing to the purpoſe; for a Church may be *in a houſe*, and yet not compoſed of that *houſe*: A Church may meet *in a family*, when it conſiſts of *more than the family*; A Church of Diſſenters may poſſibly meet *in a houſe*, and yet if one of the eccleſiaſtick *Setters*, ſhould get them in the wind, and inform againſt them, that they were there *aſſembled for the worſhip of God, with above the number of four beſides the family*, I fear, A Plea, that they that meet *in a family* are *of the family*, would hardly prevent a Conviction.

(5) Again the Doctor argues thus, *If notwithſtanding ſuch plain examples, men will extend Churches to Congregations of many families, why may not others extend them to thoſe ſocieties which conſiſt of many Congregations?* I will tell him why, 1. Becauſe his *plain examples* are *plain miſtakes*, nor can he give one inſtance of a Church that conſiſted of a *family, becauſe it was a family.* 2. We read of Churches of *many families*; but of none compoſed of *many particular Churches*: Many families have warrant to unite into a Church (not *as families*, but as the individuals are duly qualified) in order to the great ends of worſhip, edification, *&c.* But *many Churches* have no ſuch warrant to unite for the deſtruction of thoſe ends, or any one of them; And it is the end and the uſefulneſs of unity for that end which muſt regulate, and determine the Union. It is very lawful to build a Ship or Man of war as big as two or three Yachts, which may do better ſervice, but it's folly to make one that would reach from *Calice* to *Dover* which muſt lie like an uſeleſs Log, unmeet for ſailing, and the ends for which all Ships are built; but let the Doctor extend the name of Church as far as he pleaſes, to the worlds end, or as far as the *Rules of the Kings bench* have been extended, we are unconcern'd ſo long as this is clear, that how far ſoever men may extend Churches, name or thing, in Compliance with the extent of the civil government; yet the extent of our actual communion in worſhip, is no other than that of the Church of which we are by our own choice members.

(6) He goes on, *Although when the Churches increaſed, the occaſional meetings were frequent in ſeveral places, yet ſtill there was but one Church, one Altar, one Baptiſtry, one Biſhop*, which will utterly deſtroy either *parochial or Dioceſan* Churches: For if *one Baptiſtry*, and *one Church* be of the ſame extent, what will become of the *Dioceſan Church*, in

in which there are hundred of those *Baptistries*, and but *one Bishop*? and *if one Bishop, and one Church*, be of the same extent, what will become of the *Parochials*, where there is *one Baptistry* indeed, but not *one Bishop*? And it seems very evident, that in the beginning of Christianity, a Church was no larger a Body than could assemble in one place for all the ends of a Christian Society; so the Apostle supposes, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18. when ye come together *in the Church*, compar'd with *ver.* 20. when ye come together *into one place*, συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αυτὸ· where to meet *in the Church*, and to meet *in one place*, are phrases of equal Latitude; and so *Ignatius* in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*. Edit. Voss. p. 20. εἰ γὰρ ἑνὸς καὶ δευτέρου τοσαύτην ἰσχὺν ἔχει, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἥτις τῆς ἐπισκόπου, καὶ πάσης ἐκκλησίας, ὁ μὴ ἐρχόμενος ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἤδη ὑπερηφανεῖ καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀφώρισεν· i. e. *If the Prayer of one or two Christians hath such power, how much greater efficacy hath that of the Bishop, and the whole Church? he therefore that cometh not to that place,* (or that Congregation) *is already proud, and hath condemned himself.*

Hitherto the Doctor has endeavor'd to overthrow the Principle, which seeing he cannot do, he comes to suppose, or grant it, yet withal denying that from thence any thing can be drawn that will justifie Separation.

§ 1. *Suppose* (says he) *that the first Churches, by reason of the small numbers of Believers at that time, were Congregational, yet what obligation lies upon us to disturb the Peace of the Church we live in, to reduce Churches to their infant state?* To which I answer, *none at all*; we know no such obligation lies upon us, and do wish that they (supposing the Church to be *Metropolitical*, or *National*) did see *no more obligation lying upon them to disturb the Peace of the Churches that we live in*, to reduce all to their overgrown state; we are for our own liberty, without infringing theirs; but it's common to complain of other mens unpeaceableness, who will have peace with none but themselves.

§ 2. *They do not think it necessary* (says he) *to introduce the first community of goods, which was far more certainly practised than Congregational Churches, nor to wash one anothers feet, though Christ did it, and bad his Disciples do as he did.* I answer, 1. For *Community of Goods*, I dare say I shall convince the Doctor it was no obliging example, for he has no temptation to become a *Leveller*, and would lose more than he could hope to gain by putting all the Benefices of the Land into *Hotchpot*. For, there was never any such *command or practice for the promiscuous use* of all outward things, without the free consent of individual Christians; Propriety was not then destroyed, but each Christian was the Proprietor of his Estate; the great exigency of the Church did invite to a very liberal and extraordinary

dinary measure of charitable contribution to the necessity of the Saints, but still it was voluntary, and no otherwise forced than by Arguments. *Acts* 5. 4. *While it remained, was it not thy own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?* ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ· Their Charity did not destroy Propriety: And if the same distress should again overtake any particular Church as that was, it would be as much the duty of the Rich, to extend their Benevolence to the necessity of their poor Brethren as then it was, or could be. 2. For his instance of Christ's *washing his Disciples Feet*, and commanding them *to do as he did*. What person that reads the Scripture, does not observe that it was not the *washing the Feet* that was commanded, but that mutual deference, reciprocal serving of each other, avoiding of ambitious encroaching of one over another, when Christ had made them Equals: this was the great Point Christ would instruct them in by that temporary Ceremony. For so it is commanded, that we lift up *pure hands* without wrath and doubting, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. when yet none ever stood so superstitiously upon't, that every man is bound to *lift up his hands in Prayer*: but the Duty was purity of the whole man. Two things therefore there are in this reasoning, which would be better cleared, 1. That there is no more necessity for the worship of God in particular Assemblies, at all times, under all conditions of the Church, than there was for the *Community of Goods*, in that extraordinary exigence of the Church at that time. 2. That Propriety of our Estates, and the right of our particular Churches to worship God, must give way to National Church Frames, in both which we have some cause to be tender, and not to part with them till we receive better Arguments.

§ 3. The Doctor reasons thus with us: *They believe that the first Civil Government was appointed by God himself over all Families, do they therefore think themselves bound to overthrow Kingdoms, to bring things back to their first institution? if not, why shall the Peace of the Church be in so much worse a condition than that of the Civil State?* To which the Answer is very plain, 1. We look upon our selves under no obligation to *disturb*, much less to *destroy Kingdoms*, or any kind of Government whatever, to reduce things to their first institution, nor is there any need of it, to destroy the Civil Government, by reducing the Church to such a posture, as will answer the great designs of Religion. 2. The same Divine Authority that instituted Civil Government *in Families*, did also institute Government *over Families*, whether *Monarchical*, *Aristocratical*, or *Democratical*; and if the Doctor can shew that the same Authority, which appointed *particular Churches* for his own service and glory, and the edification of Believers, hath also appointed *National Churches* for the same ends, we shall confess

confeſs that his Inſtance is parallel, his Argument from thence cogent, and ſuch as will cut aſunder the Nerves of our Anſwer; when the wiſe God did inſtitute National Civil Government, yet he reſerved entire to the Maſters of Families their authority over Servants and Children, and the propriety in their Eſtates; but how will this juſtifie ſuch a National Church-Government, as deſtroys the inherent power of the Paſtors of particular Churches, making them only *ſhadows* of the primitive Paſtoral Authority, (if ſhadows) and leaving them onely the *bare Name* (if the Name) of Paſtors, without any power inherent in them, to govern the Churches, *over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made them Overſeers.*

§ 4. He reaſons thus, *It's very uncertain whether the Primitive Form were ſuch as they fancy.* If ſo, then, 1. It is as *uncertain* whether the *Primitive Form* were ſuch as he Fancies; If it were uncertain whether God would be Worſhip't in particular Congregations, *that had a power to Govern and Reform themſelves*, then it muſt be as uncertain, nay more uncertain, whether God would have a Frame Erected of ſuch Churches where God could not be Worſhip't. 2. And if it be *uncertain* what the primitive Form was, then it's very cruel to plague and torment men as Schiſmaticks that are quiet and peaceable, and deſign nothing but the ſerving their God and ſaving their Souls, for not complying with ſuch a Form or Frame, which it is uncertain whether it were the Primitive one or no. 3. And then it will be *very certain* that there can be no Obligation upon us to hold Communion with the Parochial Church, by Divine right, ſince it's *uncertain* whether God ever intended ſuch aſſemblies of Chriſtians or no. 4. And then it will be uncertain alſo whether the Parochial Miniſters be true Miniſters of Chriſt; for if there be no certainty of the Divine Right of particular Congregations, there can be as little of certainty, That there is any Divine Authority given to the Teachers of them. And 5. It will be uncertain whether God will be ſolemnly and publickly Worſhipped; for where can he ſo be, but in particular Aſſemblies? And thus to make a National Church *certain*, he has reduced all things to an utter *uncertainty.*

§ 5. He argues further to this purpoſe; *It's certainly our Duty to preſerve Peace and Unity among Chriſtians, and it's impoſſible ſo to do if Men break all orders in Pieces for the fancy they have taken up of a Primitive Platform.* It's well there is ſomething *Certain*, though it's hard to conceive how we ſhould preſerve Peace, if it be uncertain in what we are to unite and agree: It's the *Unity of the Spirit* that will be kept in the *Bond of Peace:* Peace is the Bond of the Churches, but there muſt be firſt conceived a *Church*, which Peace is to bind: There muſt be a Vineyard,

or

or to what purpoſe a Hedge? a City, or to what purpoſe a Wall or Bulwark? More particularly, 1. As it is the Duty of all Men to preſerve the Churches Peace, ſo 'tis theirs eſpecially who have got the Management of things in their hands, not to lay ſuch dubious Terms in the way of Peace which they know many Conſciencious perſons cannot get over, but have ever ſtumbled at; for it may be returned with eaſe, *It is impoſſible to preſerve Peace if men will make ſuch Orders as they know others muſt break, meerly for the fancy they have taken up of a Primitive Platform.* 2. If Peace be impoſſible to be had upon this account, who are in the fault? Diſſenters can maintain a fraternal Charity towards them and their Churches, who differ from them in Principle and Practice, if impoſers cannot, or will not diſcharge that Duty reciprocally, we are not reſponſible for their Paſſions; we can love them whether they will or no, though we cannot force them againſt their will to return that Love and Charity. 3. But muſt Peace be extended no farther than local and actual Communion? or muſt the Pariſhes of St. *Andrews*, *Sepulchers*, and St. *Giles* go together by the ears, becauſe one Church will not hold the hundredth part of them? I can hold and maintain *Peace* with the *Greek Church*, and yet I never intend actual Communion with it, unleſs ſhe were much more Reformed from all her Corruptions, than ſhe is like to be in haſte. There may be ſuch Corruptions in a Church as may *defile it*, and yet not *un-Church* it. I can diſtinguiſh between the *Chriſtians* and their *Chriſtianity* on one hand, and the *Pollutions* wherewith they have abaſed their Chriſtianity, on the other.

§ 6 But to this the Doctor Anſwers, *Men may pleaſe themſelves in talking of preſerving Peace and Love under ſeparate Communions, but our own ſad experience ſhews the contrary.* This is the upſhot of his Reaſonings, *There can be no Peace under ſeparate Communions*, which I ſhall anſwer by asking a few ſober queſtions, which will lead to their reſpective Anſwers. 1. Whether by ſeparate Communion, he intends only ſuch as is *Locally ſeparate*? if ſo, *joyful Experience ſhews us the contrary*; we have no *Bellum Parochiale*, nor are like to have, could they ſecure us as well againſt a *Bellum Epiſcopale*. 2. Does he, by *Separated Communion*, intend ſuch as differ only in ſome external Modes? How then do the Countrey Villages agree ſo well with the *Cathedral Mother-Churches*? It's certain that the Cathedral Service, and that of the under Pariſhes, differ ſo much, that a poor Countrey-man dropping in by chance into the Worſhip would be half affrighted out of his Wits, ſuch a Ditty, ſuch a Din, with Organs, Choriſters, Singing-men, and Boys, that from the *uncertain Sound* and confuſed noiſe, the poor Fellow would not know what was *Piped* or

Toota'd:

Tooted: ſo a grave Alderman in the days of *Nire*, going out with the *Common-hunt*, and being askt if he did not feel a tranſport and extaſie of ſoul at the raviſhing muſick of the hounds, proteſted he could not hear any muſick at all for the barking of thoſe yelping Curs; but come into the Country, we have nothing there but bad Rhimes ſet to as bad tunes, and worſe ſung; In the one you have turning hither, facing thither, ſuch ducking, dopping, bending, bowing, cringing, changing of poſtures, that the poor country man begins to queſtion whether it be the ſame God that they and he worſhip; and if it be, he's amazed that God ſhould regard their rude homeſpun devotions, when he has ſuch glorious ſervice, ſuch ſplendid, pompous worſhip in other places; and yet we do not ſee that they come to knocking: If then theſe two ſorts can live peaceably, and lovingly together, the one not *deſpiſing* the ruſticity of the high-ſhoe devotions; the other not *judging* of, envying at, or grudging againſt, their more ſtately ſhows and pageants; why will they quarrel with the plain diſſenters whoſe only fault is that, though their worſhip is not well trimmed up with ceremonious ribons, 'tis of as ſtrong ſtuff, will laſt as long, and keep the wearer as warm as the other? 3. Whereas the Doctor fancies that this will alienate mens affections: The remedy is to preach down paſſion, pride, cenſorioufneſs, and thoſe baſe luſts, which would produce the *ſame effects*, if all men were of *one Communion*: If one will be angry becauſe another mans Noſe is longer than his own, he muſt reſtrain his anger, for the other cannot help the longitude of his Noſe, nor give it one degree leſs of elevation. Let them puniſh or otherwiſe reſtrain thoſe incendiaries, who by their hot, and fiery tempers, will ſuffer none to be cool, that are in themſelves of a more winterly temper: Let them curb ſuch preachers, as the Author of *Curſe ye Meroz*, who did enough to have kindled a greater fire at *Guild-Hall*, than that which begun at *Pudding-Lane*: The diſeaſe lies in mens minds, and when they would heal the outward Symptom, 'tis but like him that applied the *plaiſter to the wrong finger*, and then complained of his plaiſter. Let men be preacht into the ſpirit of mutual forbearance, and there will be peace under various practices.

Theſe continual beatings of the Doctor and ſome others upon *Peace*, mind me of what I have ſomewhere or other, ſeen or read, of a great Gentleman who courted a Lady of no leſs virtue than Beauty, and ſuch an *Inamorato* was he grown, that he became exceedingly melancholly, his folded armes, his hat plukt in's eyes, retiredneſs from all company witneſſed great diſtreſs; at laſt he came to a reſolution, that ſeeing he could not win her affections, he would die a Sacrifice in the flame of his

own: This noble Lady, (whose Name I now remember, was *Madam Peace,*) not willing that any Gentleman should die a Martyr for her sake, began to relent, only she desired him, that he would not be so morose and humoursome, however that he would shave his face, that made him look so like satyr, and besides she could not tell how to have communion with his lips, for the bristles of his chin, and the turn-pikes of his overgrown *Mustachoes*; but *Monsieur Morose*, (for so was the gallant called) protested he would not lose a hair of his beard, (as poor an excrement as the ignorant Laity call'd it) for the greatest Lady in *Europe*: and so all this hot love evaporated in Complement and Ridicule.

SECT. VII.

The principle assigned to some others of the Dissenters, considered. The Arguments from the Papers of Accommodation between a Sub Committee of the Assembly, and their Brethren of the Congregational persuasion, modestly examined.

HItherto the Doctor's reasonings against that principle, *that there is a separation, but yet the separation is no Schism*, have fallen under consideration. He proceeds now to that of *some others*, who *confess* (as he says) *That to live in a state of separation from such Churches, as many at least* of ours are, is a sin: what mystery may there be in the phrase of *living in a state of separation*, I am not well aware of, and therefore cannot prevent what mischief may be design'd against us by it: Of a *State of Nature, and a state of Grace*, we have read in old *Protestant Authors*, but now adays all the outcry is against this *state of separation.*

Now the Doctor informs us, that the men of this Plea, deny that they live in a *state of separation, although they preach when, and where it is forbidden by law, and worship God, and administer Sacraments by other Rules, and after a different manner than what our Church requires. They own separation to be sinful, and have no other Refuge left but to deny the fact, which is evident to all persons.*

In the general I shall only say, that the principles and pleading of these whom the Doctor would make two parties, are really and indeed *but one and the same*; only they have made use of other expressions to declare their minds: They that say *separation is lawful*, take the word only for a withdrawing from the Communion of a Church, when they have good reasons to justifie their departure: They that say *separation is sinful*, take

take the word in an evil ſenſe, as denoting a departure from a Church out of humour, Levity, or ſome worſe principle, as hatred of, oppoſition to thoſe Churches from which they withdraw. And this he might have ſeen in thoſe very words he quoted from the *Author of Concord*. *Cauſeleſs renouncing Communion with true Churches is Schiſm, eſpecially if it be joyned with ſetting up Anti-Churches unwarrantably againſt them.* Now how many things muſt concur to make ſeparation culpable, according to the tenor of theſe words, I can hardly reckon up. 1. It muſt be ſeparation *without cauſe*, from a true Church. Now the Doctor himſelf will allow that there may be a *juſt cauſe of ſeparation from a true Church*. 2. It muſt be *renouncing communion*; but though theſe men ſuſpend, or forbear Communion for a while, yet when the Church ſhall return to herſelf, and abate of her rigors, they carry in their breaſts *Animum revertendi*, a propenſity to return again. 3. It muſt be ſetting up *Churches againſt Churches*, not one *beſides another*, to carry on the common cauſe of Religion againſt Atheiſts, Hereticks, Infidels, prophane perſons, and all the debauchees both in faith, and manners. And, 4. all this muſt be done in an *unwarrantable manner*; the circumſtances muſt be ſuch as croſs the general rules of the Goſpel, and if all theſe be found in any ſeparation, let it be doomed and condemned for ſchiſm, and ſinful. I wonder therefore with what ſincerity the Doctor could ſay, *They own the thing to be ſinful, and yet deny the fact*: Whereas that which they confeſs to be ſinful in the Rule or Principle; that only they deny themſelves to have done in fact: And what they confeſs themſelves to have done, they never confeſſed to be ſinful. *There is a ſeparation that is ſinful*, this ſay they we never practiſed: *And there is a ſeparation too that is lawful*; and here they own the fact, and deny the ſinfulneſs of it. Theſe tricks therefore will never ſatisfie his Auditors, nor his Readers; but the Doctor's great Repute, and ſmoothneſs of his Style, and a notable talent to miſrepreſent his adverſaries, have made very mean and ordinary Diſcourſes paſs for ſuperexcellent, and his name being up he may lie-abed till noon: for ſo have I heard ſomewhere of a Cutler's boy that was making a knife, and unluckily the ſteel fell off when he had welded it; No matter! no matter! Let it go boy, ſaid (the Maſter) my name's up, and my Iron will ſell, though not cut better, than other mens Steel. And now for a more particular return.

1. *They confeſs*, that they (three months ago, you muſt underſtand that we come not within the ſtatute) *preach when, and where it was forbidden by law*, and they have a cauſe for it: Becauſe they can preach *no where*, *nor time elſe*, without ſuch conditions as they judge are, and think they

have proved unlawful; but they say, that to preach when *forbidden by Law*, is not *always sinful*: For so did the Ministers of Jesus Christ, even when their Commission was not vouched by Miracles, till 300 years after Christ. And if it be said, that it is sinful in our case, that must be tryed out by no general Arguments and Reasons, but such as are special and proper to the case.

2. *They confess they do worship God, and administer Sacraments, by other Rules, and in other manner than what the present Church prescribes.* If the Dissenters do all this by other Rules, and in other manner than the Assenters do, it will follow unavoidably, that the Assenters do them by other Rules, and in other manner than the Dissenters do; which is the worst that I know will follow, unless he can prove that the Rules by which they worship God, the manner in which they administer Sacraments are nearer then, or as near the Rule and Prescript of the Word, as those of the Dissenters: So that the Question must come to this at last, Whether those Rules *by which*, that manner *after which*, the Church requires to worship God, and administer Sacraments, be conformable to the Scripture Rule of Worship, the Scripture manner of Administration? for if they be, then these Dissenters flatly affirm, That they worship God, they administer the Sacraments by *no other Rule*, in *no other manner*, than what the Church prescribes. But if they be not, then they say, If they in all their ways of Worship Conform to the *Canonical* Rules, though they do swerve a little from such as are *Apocryphal*, they hope, and believe God will acquit them, as their Consciences now do of the guilt of Schism; and if others will not, 'tis not so much material, because they shall not receive their final doom from the Churches mouth, nor be tryed by her Rules, when they come to be tryed for their All. And by this time we see, and so may the Doctor, how much better it had been for him to have follow'd his *Text*, and not to gather Doctrines thence, which never grew there; nor to have so confidently asserted, *pag.* 9. *The necessity of one fixed and certain Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments amongst Christians*, unless he could have proved it more solidly, of *such Rules* as Churches make, not contained in the general Rules of the Scripture.

3. Is the Doctor in good earnest? Or is this Rhetorick *pro formâ tantum?* Will worshiping God by *other Rules*, and in *other modes and manners* than a Church requires, make such Worship Schismatical? then mark the fatal consequences.

1. It's then apparent, that most of the Parochial Churches in *England*, are *Schismatical Churches*; for do not they worship by *other Rules*, and in *other manner* than the Church prescribes? where is the prescribed Rule

for ſinging Pſalms in *Hopkins*'s and *Sternhold*'s Metre? which yet is univerſally practiſed in moſt Pariſhes that I have heard of. The Title Page of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, tells us there are contained in it, *the Pſalms pointed as they are to be ſaid or ſung*; but what Pariſhes ſing according to thoſe Interpunctations? The end of the Book tells us, *Here the Morning Prayer is ended*; and, *Here the Evening Prayer is ended*: And yet when the Church has ended, the Pariſhes begin, and ſet up their Notes in thoſe Metrical Verſions. Again, what Rule have we for *bowing towards the Altar? the Eaſt? the Church?* And yet theſe modes and manners of worſhiping God are commonly practiſed. Are all thoſe Pariſh-Churches which are got into the garb and equipage of the Cathedrals, with Organs, Choriſters, and the like, Schiſmatical or no? If not: Then to worſhip God in another mode than what is preſcribed by the Church, may not be Schiſmatical Worſhip; but if it be ſo, then are thoſe Churches Schiſmatical, and how then can it be Schiſm to ſeparate from them?

2. It will follow alſo, (there's no remedy for it) that either the Parochial Churches, or the Cathedral, are Schiſmatical Churches; for the former are as much below the ſplendor of the latter, as the latter are above the ruſticity of the former. If there be *two Rules*, one for the mode of Cathedral Worſhip, another for that of the private Pariſhes, let them but allow half as much diverſity to the Diſſenters, and all the pother and duſt, and clamor of Schiſm will be over.

I would therefore propound one modeſt Queſtion, Why is this practice of ſinging *Hopkins*'s Metre ſo univerſally practiſed, and yet ſo little or not at all preach'd againſt in the Pulpits? *Is it for fear they ſhould have none left to preach to? That is not to be imagined of conſcientious and mortified men!* Though it's true, *Engliſh Men*, they ſay, are like your *Iriſh Cows*, that will not give down their milk kindly, except their Calves ſtand by; or however, to humor them, the Calves skin ſtuft with ſtraw: *Or is it leſt they ſhould ſeem to condemn themſelves, that make Diſſenters Schiſmaticks, for that very thing which they themſelves practiſe? This looks ſomewhat oddly, I confeſs, and the tenderneſs of a man's mind in ſuch a caſe, may, out of meer ſhame-facedneſs, keep him from declaring a Truth which flies in his face while he ſpeaks it.* What can it then be? *Do they fear the reproaches of the People?* I will not determine, but by asking the Doctor his own Queſtion, *How comes it to be Schiſmatical in ſome, and lawful in others?* Have they two weights and meaſures? Are the Diſſenters Schiſmaticks, for worſhiping God by *other Rules*; and the Pariſh-Churches pious Sons, who *do the ſame thing?* Or are they reſolved that all the World ſhall be Schiſmaticks beſides themſelves?

But

But the Doctor has got a Notion in his head, that these men are unwilling to *confess a Separation*, and he gives us the reason of it, because *they have formerly condemned it with great severity, and yet they do the same things for which they charg'd others as guilty of a sinful Separation.*

A heavy Charge! and wants nothing but the old thing *Proof*. Is it not a wise course to pretend to give a Reason of nothing? To assign a cause of a thing, before it's clear that there is such a thing in the World? To tell us why they are unwilling, before it appears they are unwilling? *So far as they do Separate, they are willing to confess it*; and would he have them confess more than the Truth against themselves? They own that they do not locally hold Communion with all Parishes, at all times, in all the parts of Worship, and this they are ready to prove is not Schism, is not sinful. They avow that they do hold Communion with some Parishes in some Ordinances, at some times, and this, they say, will avoid the charge of a total Separation. They say, they *never condemned that for Separation in others*, which *they practise* themselves. How will he evince this? Why he has ransacked and rumaged all *the Papers of Accommodation* that past between the *Presbyterians*, and the *Independents*, and there he finds, *That the Assembly of Divines urged their dissenting Brethren to comply with their Rules of Church-Government, and charged them with Schism if they did it not.* Well, what then? Were *the Rules* proposed by the Assembly the same with these that are urged now? Were they of the same nature? doubtfulness? difficulty? What if it was not the *Assembly*, but a *Committee*, a *Sub-Committee*, or a *Subter-Sub-Committee* of the Assembly? What if it was not the final judgment of the Assembly, but the private opinion of that Sub-Committee? And what if we be no ways obliged to abide by their judgments or opinions? And what if the *Presbyterians* were too rigid, the other too stiff in their Sentiments, must the Church only imitate them in their weaknesses, when they had so many excellencies which deserved imitation? And lastly, what if the Doctor has misreported the matter of Fact as there laid down? Any of these, much more all these will render the most plausible part of his Sermon preached, or his Discourse printed, manifestly impertinent. All which particulars, and many more, I shall make out from those very Papers.

(1) The Order of the Lords and Commons, *Die Jovis, Novemb.* 6. 1645, which Ordered the Committee to Act, gives them these Instructions, *That they should take into consideration the differences in Opinions of the Members of the Assembly in point of Church-Government, and to endeavour an Union if it be possible*; *And in case that cannot be done, to endeavor*

endeavour to find out some way how far tender Conſciences, *who cannot in all things ſubmit to the* Common Rule, *which ſhall be Eſtabliſhed, may be born with according to the word*: Here we ſee a proviſion deſigned for *Tender Conſciences*, and that *before the Rule was Eſtabliſht*, in caſe an Union could not be procured, which had it been done in our caſe, all differences might have been compoſed.

(2.) The Diſſenting Brethren ſay, p. 15. *That they agreed in thoſe things which contained the Subſtance of the Service and Worſhip of God in the Directory, according to the Preface, and were confident they ſhould agree in the Confeſſion of Faith*; ſo that here was nothing but a *Punctilio of Government* about which they differ'd.

(3.) The Committee, p. 19. render this Reaſon, why the deſire of their Brethren could not, *in Terminis*, be granted, *Becauſe it held out a total Separation from the Rule, as if in nothing it were to be complied with, nor their Churches be Communicated with in any thing, which argued Church-Communion, and that more could not be done or ſaid againſt falſe Churches*, wherein though they might be miſtaken, yet it ſhews upon what Reaſons they proceeded; but the Perſons againſt whom the Doctor diſputes neither plead for, nor practice a *total Separation*, nor do any thing that may imply the *Parrochial Churches* to be *falſe Churches*.

(4.) The Committee, or Sub-Committee, had many things to urge, which the Doctor cannot make uſe of againſt the Diſſenters, as 1. *That they were now endeavouring a further Reformation according to the Word of God*; and therefore there was more ground for Hope, more reaſon for Patience to ſee what the Iſſue of their Conſultations might prove: And herein perhaps the Diſſenting Brethren might be a little too haſty and nimble with them; who knows but matters might have been adjuſted to their ſatisfaction? But things are much otherwiſe with us. For, 1. they are ſo far from Reforming according to the Word of God, that they own it not for a perfect Rule of Reformation. 2. They have taken up their Reſt, and will not proceed one Step farther, not to King *Edward's Beginning*, nor Queen *Elizabeths Beginning*, much leſs to what Poſture things were in at *Chriſt's Beginning*. 3. When they had power in their hands, by His Majeſties Commiſſion, to have reformed the *Liturgy*, to have eaſed the People of their Burdens, they would not *Abate an Ace* of their Pretenſions, but rendred the Terms of Communion more ſevere and difficult. 4. The Pariſh Churches are meer *Minors*, and *under Age*, they move by the Motions of others, cannot Reform themſelves, but are ſtrictly tyed up to the Rubricks, Canons, and Conſtitutions of the Convocation, ſo that we have not the ſame Reaſon to hope for their Reform-

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ing of Worſhip according to the Word of God, 5. And yet this ſhall not be any prejudice to them, for if they ſhall do ſo, though it were to morrow, or a year, or ten years hence, we ſtand ready to fall in with ſuch Reformation: And farther, 2. the Committee did plead, That they had both of them Covenanted *to endeavour the neareſt Conjunction*, and therefore, for their Oaths ſake, were bound to part with as much of their Right as with a good Conſcience they could forego: But Diſſenters are under no ſuch Obligation, that they know of, to endeavour ſuch Conjunction with them who obtend their *meer Wills* to their *Edification*, and ſome pretend farther, That they are under a *Solemn Covenant to endeavour a Reformation according to the Word of God, in their reſpective places and ſtations*, and therefore ought not to comply with any Declenſions and Departures from ſuch Reformation.

(5) the Committee were willing, *That ſome Expedient ſhould be endeavoured, how to bear with Diſſenters in the Particulars wherein they could not agree*; But we ſee no ſuch expedient endeavoured after, nor once thought of, nay declared againſt, notwithſtanding the many *Humble Petitions for Peace* that have been preſented to them, notwithſtanding *His Majeſties Gracious Declaration about Eccleſiaſtical Affairs*, and the Parliaments Inclinations to ſhew ſome favour to tender Conſciences; nay they have declared againſt any Condeſcentions, and are daily provoking Magiſtrates to the utmoſt Rigour, and are like the immovable Bank, to which if the Diſſenters will not wholly come over, the Boat and the Bank muſt never meet.

(6) Such was the tenderneſs of that Committee, that we find not ſo much in a dozen Convocations. For firſt they offer, *That ſuch as, through ſcruple or error of Conſcience, cannot joyn to partake of the Lords Supper, ſhall repair to the Miniſter and Elders for ſatisfaction, which if they cannot receive, they ſhall not be compel'd to Communicate in the Lords Supper, provided that in all other parts of Worſhip* (wherein there was an agreement) *they joyned with the Congregation.* 2. They offer, p. 22. *That ſuch as are under the Government of the Congregation where they live* (*not being Officers*) *ſhall ſeek ſatisfaction* (as before) *which if they cannot receive, they ſhall not be compel'd to be under the power of Cenſures from Claſſes or Synods, provided they continued under the Government of that Congregation.* How joyful at, how thankful for ſuch Moderation would thouſands of poor Engliſh-men be, if they might enjoy the Benefit of ſuch a Canon, to ſave their Perſons from a Priſon, their Eſtates from Ruine, and their Families from Deſolation!

(7) The

(7) The Sub-Committee do readily acknowledge, *That Schiſm conſiſts not in every diverſity of Opinion and Practice, but in an open Breach of Love, and that no Uniformity is neceſſary to prevent Schiſm.* p. 47. But the Doctor would make us believe, p. 32. *That men may pleaſe themſelves in talking of Peace and Love under ſeparate Communions, but ſad Experience ſhews the contrary.*

(8) The Committee, p. 48. think the Diſſenting Brethren wrong them, in ſaying *That they make thoſe Impoſitions upon the people as qualifications for receiving Sacraments*, whenas *they deſired no more than that the people appeared to be Orthodox*: But certainly here's ſomething more than *Orthodoxy* required of us (even in the judgment of their own Teſt of *Orthodoxy*) as a qualification for receiving Sacraments; and we muſt Submit to the *Sign of the Croſs* in the one Sacrament for our Infants, and *Kneeling* in the other, as neceſſary to our own receiving them, when neither the one nor the other were mentioned by the *Aſſembly*.

(9) The Committee expreſly declare, *they would not have the Diſſenting Brethren walk by their Rule farther than as they had attained*: But the Doctor is for the Rule of Severity, waving the great Rule of Charity, *notwithſtanding the different attainments of Chriſtians.*

(10) The Committee profeſs their Wonder (p. 49.) That *their Brethren ſhould impute it to them, as if they arrogated to themſelves a power in Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies to determine and impoſe circumſtantial matters*: *Seeing*, ſay they, *our Propoſition doth mention nothing but Agreement in Subſtance.* But the Doctor ſuppoſing that we are agreed in the *Subſtantials of Worſhip* with him, yet preſſes us to come to the Churches Rules in thoſe things which they themſelves call Circumſtantials.

(11) The Committee, p. 49. deſires, *That the matters of Offence may be particularly expreſſed*, profeſſing *their earneſt deſire, as much as in them lay, to remove whatever may hinder comfortable Communion, that there may be no juſt cauſe of Separation.* But the preſent Diſſenters have particularly expreſſed the matters of their Offence, and cannot obtain a removal of them, neither for Love nor Money; and it's a very hard World when neither of thoſe two Wedges will drive.

(12) And they say farther, *That the Honourable Houses may find out more for Reformation than haply the Assembly have Advised, or themselves yet concluded, so that they will be willing to be further instructed in the things that belong to the Churches Peace.* But our good Masters have set up their *Hercules*'s Pillars, and Engraven on them *Ne plus ultra*, so that now Hope it self is become hopeless, Patience worn to the Stumps, and all Endeavours out of breath; for after *Cheese and Canon* comes *Nothing*.

(13) Whatever the Altercations and Debates between the two Parties were in the Sub-Committee, yet the Resolve, at last, (which is the main, if not only thing considerable) was this, *Decemb.* 15. *Resolved upon the question, That they which agree in the substance of the Worship in the Directory according to the Preface, and agree in the Confession of Faith, and with the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, contained in their Confessions and writings, as we do, who differ from those Brethren in matters of Discipline, shall have the benefit of the* Indulgence.

In short, It may be a plausible, but no righteous Method, to take the Arguments of the Committee, which were only conclusive in the Case before them (and perhaps not there) and to applie them to our present Case, which is quite another thing; And yet when all is said that can be said in this matter, it must be confessed there were undue heats and animosities between the Brethren, both standing too high upon their Pantables, which deserves to be lamented, and not Imitated, and drawn into Argument and Example to justifie the inflexible Rigour of the present Terms of Communion.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Philip. 3. 15. *Considered. How the Doctor rids himself of the danger of the Context. His second Question propounded, and answered like the former, that is, not at all: His Discourse about Conscience examined.*

THe Author of the Discourse was very apprehensive that the *Context* would be urged against his interpretation of the *Text*, and therefore to save us a labour he has from thence formed an objection for us against his own Doctrine, which we thankfully acknowledge, and accept; *whatever may be said* (says he) *as to other Pleas, for their present practices, my Text* (it should have been the verse before it) *seems to afford the strongest of all, that men are to be pressed to go no further than they have already attained, and not to be strained up to an Uniformity, beyond the dictates of their Consciences*; but to be let alone as the Apostle directs in the foregoing verse, If any one be otherwise minded, *he must be left to God, and that manifestation of his will, he will be pleased to give him.*

This Objection to say truth is drawn up with as much integrity as we could well expect: For the Counsel for the *Defendent* is hardly to be trusted to draw up the declaration for the *Plaintiff*: One small exception we have against his wording our Plea, and 'tis but a small one: We say not, *that men are not to be pressed to go further than they have attained*, provided they be only *pressed* with such Arguments as are proper for the conviction of Rational Creatures: For thus would our Blessed *Savior* have them pressed, who was the grand exemplar of all moderation and meekness: *Luke* 14. 23. *Compel them to come in!* ἀνάγκασον εἰσελθεῖν. And let tender Consciences be thus compelled, and spare them not; we shall never complain of this force, this violence: But there is a more savage and ferine Method of Compulsion, like that of the Gentleman who courteously invited his poor Tenants to a Christmas dinner by a Bum-bailiff, and Tickets of green-wax, which *filled his house* indeed with guests, but spoiled all the mirth of the Feast: A Hawk will never make a good sign for a Dove-

Coat: We would not have men *preſſed* and oppreſſed with *Club-Logick*, as a procedure unſuitable to the nature of Chriſtianity. And now we abide by the Objection; If God himſelf has given the *Indulgence*, what man has power *to take off the Seal*? or why ſhould the Church trouble it ſelf and others with doubtful Canons, when they that have *not attained* to ſatisfaction about them, have the condeſcenſion of God to plead for the ſuſpenſion of their own Acts, during ſuch diſſatisfaction.

Now this knot the Doctor will untie, or cut, or break. And the clearing *of it* (he ſays) *will give a full anſwer to the ſecond enquiry*, viz. *what is to be done if men cannot come up to the Rule preſcribed?*

But is not this very much about and about the Buſh? why ſhould he give himſelf the needleſs trouble to enquire ſo ſcrupulouſly *what is to be done in caſe men cannot come up to the Rule*, when the Apoſtle has already given us a ſhort, but plain anſwer to it? namely, *that they are to be left to God for farther inſtruction.* But the Doctor is not ſatisfied with this Anſwer, and therefore he will *anſwer it in theſe particulars*: Anſwer it? yes, juſt as he did the former queſtion, by ſpeaking never a word to it. Had he been pleaſed to have anſwered the Queſtion *what is to be done*? he ſhould have reſolved us, firſt, *What means are to be uſed to reclaim them that cannot come up?* whether fair or fowl? Chriſtian or barbarous? whether corporal penalties are to be *ſuſpended*, or the Diſſenters? whether they are to be left in Gods hands, or taken into the Gaolers clutches? Secondly, *By whom* this muſt be *done*, that is to be done? as what *they are to do* who are diſſatisfied? what courſe they muſt take to attain more knowledge of Gods mind and Will in that matter, that ſo they may enlarge their practice according to the improvement of their underſtanding? Let it not then be ill taken if we put a few queſtions about this Queſtion.

I. What muſt *they do*, to whom *a Rule* is preſcribed by Men about their worſhiping of God, *who cannot come up to it*? And ſurely if pride and intereſt had not muddied it, the Anſwer had run very clear: They ought to examine and try that Rule by the word of God, to beg of him inſtruction in any point wherein they may poſſibly be *otherwiſe minded* than he would have them: And in the mean time to forbear, *for whatſoever is not of faith is ſin*, that is, whatever a man *does*, and is not perſwaded that it may be *lawfully done.*

II. *What*

II. *What must be done* by Church Governours, *if men cannot come up to their eſtabliſht Rules*? and thus much of the Anſwer is exceeding obvious.

1. That they had better ſit ſtill and *do nothing*, than riſe up, and *do miſchief*; Let 'em do no more harm than good, and let them be doing.

2. That if they muſt need have more work *to do*, let 'em be ſure they have a *Commiſſion* from God *to do it*, leſt while *they do what they ought not to have done*, and *leave undone thoſe things they ought to have done*, they make their ſins of *Commiſſion* greater than their ſins of *Omiſſion*. And,

3. They may do well, among all their doings to conſider whether Conſcience be not Gods *peculiar*, and ſo not within their precincts; out of their juriſdiction, and not liable to their citations, proceſſes, ſummons, and viſitations; if they will judge, let 'em be ſure they be competent judges: if they will be buſie, let 'em beware it be not in *Alieno foro*.

4. If they would know what they muſt *do to others*, let 'em firſt put the caſe what they would have *done to themſelves*? let them do no more at home, than they would have done to them ſuppoſing they were Proteſtants in *Italy* or *Spain*. It's very uſeful now and then for great men to put themſelves into poor mens circumſtances; (I do not perſuade 'em to change places with them, but to put caſes) ſuppoſe our Biſhops had been in Biſhop *Ridley*'s caſe when his nearer approach to the fire had thawed his Epiſcopal Rigor, what would they have done? would they have magnified the mercy of their own mercileſs enemies for compelling them to *walk farther than they had attained*? or would they have called the Martyrs fools who upon their ordinary call preached the Goſpel, notwithſtanding that the laws had ſilenced them?

III. It had been much in anſwer to our expectation, and the Queſtion, if he had pleaſed to have revealed the great ſecret, *what this preſcribed Rule is*? and this would have been more pertinent, than a diſcuſſion of the *principle of individuation, is to the ſixth commandement*. As,

1. Whether this *Rule* be one preſcribed *by God*, it which caſe no mans ignorance will vacate the rule, though it incapacitate him at preſent to obey it; or *by man*, without direction and warrant from God, in which caſe, we need no ignorance to excuſe us, ſeeing power to command and obligation to obey, are Twins, both are born, live, and die together.

2. Whe-

2. Whether this *prescribed Rule*, be such as is subservient to some other Rule prescribed by God, or no way useful to that purpose? We freely grant, that whatever is necessary to reduce any Command of God into Act, and Exercise, may be, must be the matter of such prescribed Rules; whatever serves true decency and order, whatever tends to edification, to peace, or the glory of God, may be fit matter for a Rule, but rules about things no ways necessary to these ends, come not under humane determination.

These things, or somewhat like these, might have offer'd at an Answer to the Question; but let us hear the Doctor, who, the *Reader* must observe, is not answering to the *Question*, but to the *Objection*, which he would persuade us will give a full Answer to the 2d *Question*, but no man believes it.

§ 1. Then, *This* (says he) *can never justifie men in not doing what they lawfully may do.* This, What? why, *that men are to be pressed to go no farther than they have attained.* This will *not justifie* men! I believe it will not, it was never intended *to justifie them*, but *to restrain* their acting, *to excuse 'em* in suspending their own Act till farther satisfaction; but it will *not justifie them!* Before *what Judge*, before *whose Tribunal* will it *not justifie them?* It will not justifie them *before God*, if through supine negligence in searching into the Will of God, *about Sin and Duty, lawful and unlawful*, they understand not the Bounds of their Christian liberty, and yet even here the same God who condemns their sinful ignorance, will not have them to give ignorant obedience: But what is this *to mans judgment?* who knows nothing more or less of mens negligence than they shall tell him? But what if he has used all due means to obtain satisfaction in the matters prescribed, and yet cannot be satisfied but that either *the things are sinful* that are commanded, or the *Authority incompetent* by which they are commanded, will not this *justifie him* neither? Then he must be condemned by men, but God will so far justifie him, that he shall not be condemned for acting no farther than his own light directs him.

This Proposition of the Doctors he confirms by a Reason: *For* (says he) *the Apostle makes Communion necessary as far as 'tis lawful, and that upon the general obligation that lies upon all Christians to do what in them lies, for preservation of the Peace of the Church.* This Rule of the Apostle! I find

I find indeed he lays down a Rule that we ſhould *walk as far as we have attained*, but no Rule that we ſhould walk up *to the lawfulneſs* of the things, but to what we have *attained of their lawfulneſs*; *lawfulneſs* is not the *meaſure* of our walking in this caſe, but *knowledge*. Things may be *in themſelves lawful*, but if *only ſo*, and *no more*, and a Chriſtian has not attained to *ſatisfaction* of their lawfulneſs, if he *walks ſo far as he has attained*, he fulfils the Apoſtles Rule, and pleads the benefit of the other *to be left to God's inſtruction*. But this is the Doctor's method to confound what is lawful *objectivè*, and what is ſo *ſubjectivè*, as if the Apoſtles Rule had been, *ſo far as the things are lawful in themſelves, ſo let us all walk*; when as he only requires us *to walk ſo far as we have attained* to ſee their lawfulneſs: And both the Apoſtles Rules do ſuppoſe that ſome things are in their *own nature* lawful, which are not ſo diſcerned by every Chriſtian, in which piteous caſe, he commands them to be left to God.

But ſtill he judges, *that the Apoſtles Rule makes Communion neceſſary as far as 'tis lawful*. I cannot help that! nor do I ſee that the Apoſtle intends to ſpeak any thing of the Communion of Chriſtians among themſelves; for ſuch Communion may be had and maintained under very great variety of apprehenſions and practices: if Churchmen would once learn to preach up Love, inſtead of Hatred; and preach down Perſecution, inſtead of Conformity to their own little Niceties. Now to make his Reaſon carry a fairer face of probability, the Doctor has cleverly corrupted his Text, as he has all along perverted the ſenſe, and reads it thus: *As far as ye have attained walk by the ſame Rule, Do the ſame things*; which looks very fairly to and favorably upon, our dearly beloved *Uniformity*; but he that rides of a trotting Horſe, will never ſpie ſmall faults. *Do the ſame things*; i. e. Let not one Miniſter preach with an Hour-glaſs, when another has none: nor one read Service in his Gown, when the other wears the Surplice. Let not one Chriſtian *ſtand* at Prayer, when his Neighbor *kneels*; but let every man do juſt the ſame things that another does, upon pain and peril that ſhall fall thereon: And all this goodly gear hangs on a Peg that is not worth a Pin, *viz.* the rendring τὸ φρονεῖν, *Do the ſame things*. When all the Apoſtle commands amounts to no more than this, That we ſhould do as he did, *walk as far as we have attained*, and preſs toward the mark, the *ſame mark* he aimed at, and leave others to him who delights in *mercy*, more than *ſacrifice of his own appointment*, much more than in *Ceremony of mans appointment*; and infinitely

nitely more than in *Cruelty*, which men have invented to ſhew their wickedneſs, but he has forbidden to demonſtrate his holineſs.

Now what pretty ſport would this make the Reader, if the Doctors Anſwerer were in the humor; *Let us all do the ſame things!* Very good! Will then they do as *we do*? not for a world! Muſt we do as *they do*? By what authority? *Ne audiantur hæc verba* ego dico, *aut* tu dicis, *ſed quid dicit Dominus*? No more then of this, *what they*, or *we ſay*, or *do*, but what has God, the impartial Umpire, determin'd between us? Is what *they do* nearer the Rule? we will *do it with them*. If our practice come nearer the Rule, are they willing to become conformable to that Rule, though they be Nonconformiſts to that Rule which is more remote? Now all the fat is in the fire, and that will make a terrible flame!

Theſe Reaſonings the Doctor thinks to blow away with the breath of his mouth, and would perſuade us that we *have attained already* to a ſatisfaction of the things preſcribed by *their Rule*, and therefore ought, in purſuance of the *Apoſtle's Rule*, to walk up to what is ſo preſcribed. *I dare ſay*, (ſo he goes on) *if moſt of the Preachers at this day in the Separate Meetings were ſoberly ask'd their judgments, Whether it were lawful for the People to join with us in our Publick Aſſemblies, they would not deny it.* But there's more cunning in theſe words, than every one is aware of.

1. I cannot tell what the Preachers at this day would anſwer, if they were *ſoberly askt* the Queſtion; but I doubt they never intend to *do that*, who put the Queſtion. A *ſober Queſtion*, deſerves a *ſober Anſwer*; and I have heard of a *ſober, and compaſſionate Enquiry*, that has been anſwer'd with more *ſobriety, and compaſſion*, than it deſerved: But the Queſtion now, is *Snick or Snee*? Turn, or Starve? Conform, or Hang? Uſe the Croſs, or bear the Croſs? And ſo we once heard the Doctrine at a Viſitation Sermon, *That in vain had the Parliament made Laws to turn the Presbyterians out of their Livings, if men did entertain them in their Houſes, and at their Tables.*

2. If the *Preachers in the Separate Meetings* would thus anſwer the Queſtion, I ſhould much queſtion their wiſdom; for no wiſe man will anſwer a Queſtion, before he underſtands it: But *is it lawful to join in the Parochial Aſſemblies?* It may be lawful, and it may not be lawful: It may be ſo, to join with *ſome Aſſemblies*, and yet not with all: *In ſome parts* of Worſhip, not *in others:* It may be lawful to *ſome perſons* who judge it lawful (ſuppoſing it ſo to be) when yet 'tis not ſo to others, who have *not attained* to ſuch a judgment.

3. I

3. I have a confidence contrary to his, That if moſt of the Preachers in the Separate Meetings were asked their judgments (whether ſoberly, or madly) about the lawfulneſs of joining with the Parochial Churches in all the parts of Worſhip, or in any Excluſive to their joining with other Aſſemblies, where the Goſpel Rule is more ſtrictly obſerved, they would flatly deny it; and let theſe Men be brought to the Poll, I queſtion not but they will carry it; and I ſuppoſe that though the Doctor preacht in the *Chappel*, he never took the Poll of the Nonconformiſts in *Guildhall*.

4. Let the Queſtion be put, Whether the People may lawfully ſeparate from thoſe Churches whereof they are regularly Members, and from thoſe Paſtors under whoſe Miniſterial conduct their own free Election has placed them, to join ordinarily and conſtantly with any other particular Churches, and they, according to Reaſon and Scripture, will anſwer in the Negative.

And now the Doctor has *ſuppoſed* what he pleaſes, let him but now infer and ſurmiſe what he pleaſes too, and the day is his own.

(1) He infers, *If the Miniſters judge it lawful, why do they not preach it in their Congregations?*

Anſw. 1. They *do not* preach it, becauſe they *do preach* it; that is, ſo far as they judge it lawful, they either preach it, or print it; or partly preach, and partly print, as the Doctor did by his own Diſcourſe or Sermon.

2. Some do not preach at all, becauſe Chriſt has found them other and better work to do, than to preach up Ceremonies, wherein they themſelves not being ſatisfied, are very unfit to give ſatisfaction to their people: And if we ſhould tell the people *how far they are bound to comply with an eſtabliſht Rule*, at that rate the Doctor has anſwer'd the Queſtion, we ſhould leave the people as wiſe as we found them.

(2) The Doctor falls a gueſſing what ſhould be the Reaſon they do not preach this Doctrine to their people; why they keep it ſuch a ſecret in their breaſts.

1. He conjectures it may be for fear *they ſhould have none to preach to*; a vain conjecture, ſince they that preach moſt often, and open *how far it's lawful to Conform*, have the moſt numerous Congregations.

2. He conjectures it may be leſt they *ſhould ſeem to condemn themſelves, whil'ſt they preach againſt* Separation *in a* Separate Congregation; that cannot be it, for they that are *locally ſeparated* from all Congregations, may conſiſtently preach againſt Schiſmatical *Separation* from any.

3. He conjectures it may be *They fear the reproaches of the People?* Nor that neither! for they that judge their duty so to preach, so to write, do it without reproach of the more temperate, and fear not the reproach of them that are otherwise. But why do not our Diviners, and guessers at other mens corrupt intentions preach against the Notorious Crimes of those that are their hearers? are there none but Dissenters there to be railed at? have they none that live in open Adultery? none that are Common Drunkards, that for time of need could piss out a scare-fire? *Is it for fear they should have none to preach to?* or for fear they should have *no Pulpit* to preach in? or be silenced, and not permitted *a Tongue* to preach? or is it lest they should *Condemn themselves*, whilst they preach against the crimes of others? or do they fear the reproaches of the people, that they are *half presbyterians, semi-fanaticks, parboyled puritans?* I think its time for men to have done with these *evil surmisings*, we have somthing more concerns us to judge of, than other mens hearts: when the Doctor Preacht to his auditory in *Gods Name*, yet he should not have stept into *Gods throne*; but have left *the thoughts, and intents of the heart* to him, before whom they are *open, and Naked.*

I shall not here call over the Doctors particular insinuations, which are so subtilly laid, that they do the mischief, and instil all the poyson of a false accusation, but yet escape before men the charge of it: only I take notice of one thing: *Is it not* (saies he) *as plainly written by St. Paul*, If I yet please Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ; as, Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel? It is so with *equal plainness* by the Apostle, and with *equal impertinency* by the Doctor and with *equal justification* of the Nonconformists: for they dare not please men to the displeasing of Christ, both which they would do, by *sacrilegious Desertion of their Ministry*: but Christs displeasure is not to be compensated by mens *good will*, nor his love to be forfeited for fear of incurring their *ill will*: And on whose side the temptation *to men pleasing* most lies, the impartial world will judge though we be silent.

§ 2. His second particular is this: *If the bare dissatisfaction of mens consciences do justifie the lawfulness of separation, and breaking an establisht Rule, it were to little purpose to make any Rule at all*: And to speak my mind freely, unless the Rules that have been made in some Countries were to better purposes, I know not to what purpose they were made at all; these Rules have made the world so irregular, and unruly: What their purposes were that made the Rules, I shall not enquire

enquire, but what we see or may say; the event of them for many Centuries has been nothing but either *blind obedience* in the most, or *necessary separation* in the rest: And much better that all these Humane ecclesiastick rules had never been made; than to be made of such sinful materials as must divide us, such dubious things, as will perplex us, or by such persons whom God has not authorized to Command us. But his *proposition* I must except against upon these following grounds.

(1) I shall not say, *It is no distinct proposition* from the former, being only *a Reason of it*; nor that he might have found in his own discourse twenty more propositions if this may stand for one; but onely make my exceptions.

1. This proposition like most of the rest, is of an uncertain sound. First we know not what mystery there lies in, or may lurk under that Term *Bare dissatisfaction*. For this word has haunted us all along through the discourse; *Barely* Congregational. *p.* 30. *Bare* suspending Communion. *p.* 20. *Barely* relating to acts of worship. *p.* 17. And now at last *Bare* dissatisfaction. If he means no more than such dissatisfaction, as has no fair reason for it, that perhaps will not justify any man, in any thing he does, or does not: but there is a dissatisfaction, well cloath'd with decent, and *Comely presumptions* that the thing it's dissatisfied about is unlawful, and it may be with *probable arguments* too, though it wants such demonstration, *cui non potest subesse falsum*. And this will justifie if not *positive separation*, yet *suspension of a mans action in positive Communion*.

2. If *bare dissatisfaction* will justifie our *not acting*, (which is all we plead *bare dissatisfaction* for) there is another thing that justifies our *Communion* with other Churches where we may enjoy the Ordinances of Christ without such dissatisfaction: and that is the *Command of God*, which has made it our express duty to walk in the ways of Gods appointment. So that if *dissatisfaction* tye us up from joyning in *one place*; *peremptory Command* will enjoyn us to joyn in some other.

3. This *establisht Rule*, that fills up both pages of his Sermon, is an equivocal term; for such a Rule may be lawful, or unlawful according to *the matter* of it: If the matter of it be things *unlawful*, there needs *no dissatisfaction* of conscience to justifie separation from it, or the violation of it, the will of God has already determined that point: If it be *lawful*, and conscience be *dissatisfied* about it; conscience will tie up from acting according to it, though not oblige to act against it

(2) His Propoſition is tardy too, in reſpect of the *Reaſon* he gives to back it. *Becauſe* (ſays he) *it is impoſſible to make any* [*Rule*] *which ignorant and injudicious men ſhall not apprehend to be, in ſomething or other, againſt the Dictates of their Conſciences.* But let *knowing and judicious men* make the Rules, and there will be leſs cauſe for *ignorant and injudicious men* to break 'em: They that will make Rules about indifferent things, had need have more than an indifferent Judgment, more than an *ordinary Wiſdom* to accommodate them to the meaſure of Knowledge of thoſe for whom they are made: And in this caſe Rules ſhould ſhould not be made as men make Tobacco-Pipes and Glaſſes, on purpoſe to be broken. Tradeſmen indeed cannot live if their Wares were Immortal; but are Church-men more afraid their *Tickney-Rules* and *China-Canons* ſhould be preſerved than broken? It were better the whole Fry of Apparitors, Summoners ſhould ſtarve than live upon the new-made Sins of the people. But *ignorant men will apprehend theſe Rules againſt their Conſciences*: Let then Rules be made for the *knowing and wiſe*, and leave the poor ignorants to live and grow wiſer, rather than knock 'em o'th' head becauſe they want Brains. But thus it was, thus it ever will be, whileſt men will be eſtabliſhing their own *Rules of Severity*, and neglect the *Rule of Charity* given them by the Spirit. Rom. 14. 3. *Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not, nor him that eateth not, judge him that eateth*; which was a Rule made upon as good Advice as any of thoſe made by any Church at any time ſince.

Let then the Doctor pleaſe himſelf with his ſeeming Advantages from the Papers of accommodation, we need ſay no more than,

1. That the Caſe is hugely wide between what the Committee, or Sub-Committee there required of their Diſſenting Brethren, and what the Biſhops now require of the people in order to an Union.

2. That his Inferences are not fairly drawn from their Expreſſions.

3. The Aſſembly and their Committees were but men, ſubject to the like Paſſions with their Brethren, and therefore,

4. That we are not obliged to vindicate every expreſſion which in heat or haſte dropt from their Pens, nor to be concluded by their Determinations, which, with what has been before obſerved upon this ſubject, is enough to blunt the edge and break the back of the Doctor's Arguments drawn from their Conceſſions: And yet I cannot forbear a particular examination of ſome of them, for a taſte of the reſt.

(1) *Though*

(1) *Though Tenderneſs of Conſcience may juſtifie Non-Communion in the thing ſcrupled, yet it can never juſtifie Separation*: That is, he that has the Church-dores lockt upon him muſt ſtand there cooling his Toes, and never addreſs himſelf to others that are open, for fear of Mr. *Hales* his *Scare-Crow*, Separation. But for Anſwer,

1. We produce *Tenderneſs of Conſcience* for no other uſe than to *juſtifie Non-Communion in the things that are ſcrupled.*

2. We produce the *Authority of God* to juſtifie our Obedience to all his Commands, Statutes, Judgments, and inſtituted Worſhip.

3. We produce plain reaſon from thoſe premiſes to juſtifie our Churches: For if tenderneſs of Conſcience will juſtifie us in *Non-Communion*, and God's Command juſtifie us to Worſhip him according to his Revealed Will, we muſt of meer neceſſity ſeparate from a Church where we cannot have all the Ordinances of Chriſt, to another where we can.

4. We ſay, The Doctrine of the Sub-Committee, *viz. That ſuch tenderneſs of Conſcience as ariſeth out of an opinion* (cui poteſt ſubeſſe falſum) *which may be falſe, is not a ſufficient ground*, &c. *to juſtifie Separation*; and that of the A. B. *Laud*'s, who would have all Diſſenters produce ſuch Arguments for their Diſſent, require more Evidence than our Learned Doctor will allow for the *Exiſtence of a Deity.*

This Point, by the way, I ſhall a little examine, becauſe I find it aſſerted in ſome of the Doctors *ſtaple-Diſcourſes*: I ſhall not cite his *Irenicum*, becauſe he has put that Piece amongſt his Tracts that are to be retracted, and ſeems weary of his *Weapon-Salve*, and will now truſt only to his *Weapon.* His *Rational Account* is not yet amongſt his prohibited Pieces. Now, p. 178, 179. he thus expreſſes himſelf, *It is a piece of great weakneſs of Judgment to ſay there can be no certain aſſent where there is a meer poſſibility of being deceived; for there is no kind of aſſent in the human underſtanding, as to the exiſtence of any thing, but there is a poſſibility of Deception in it.* And p. 206, 207. he calls aloud to the Papiſts to come forth with their *infallible Arguments to prove the exiſtence of a Deity, before they talk of an infallible way of proving the truth of Religion*: And ſurely the Diſſenters are not more rigidly obliged to prove the lawfulneſs of their Separation, nor the ſinfulneſs of the Terms impoſed on them, by Arguments which cannot poſſibly be falſe, than all Mankind is to produce ſuch infallible Proofs for the exiſtence of the Godhead.

Nay,

Nay, further by what I can gather from the Doctor, he ſeems to proceed upon ſuch principles, as plainly render it impoſſible by any certain Argument to prove the exiſtence of a Deity. *Orig. ſacr. p.* 230. where,

1. He lays down this for a principle: *That the foundation of all certainty lies in the neceſſary exiſtence of a being abſolutely perfect*; ſo that *unleſs I know that there is a God, I cannot be aſſured that I know any thing in a certain manner. Now then if all certainty doth ſuppoſe the exiſtence of a being ſo abſolutely perfect, I muſt, before I can know any thing certainly, conclude that there is an infinity of knowledge, wiſdom, power, and goodneſs in this God.*

If then God be the *firſt knowable*, and that it's impoſſible to know any thing certainly, Except I firſt know ſuch a being as God, how ſhall we come to prove his exiſtence by ſuch demonſtration *cui non poteſt ſubeſſe falſum*? ſhall we demonſtrate a God *A pricri*? what cauſe ſhall we find of him, upon which, and from which our demonſtration may be formed: without *a cauſe*, we cannot demonſtrate *à priori*; And ſuppoſing *a cauſe*, we ſuppoſe him to be *no God*: Shall we then proceed *à poſteriori*, from the Effects to the Cauſe? The Apoſtle would have gone this way, *Rom.* 1. 20. And *from the creation of the world*, have demonſtrated his *eternal Power, and Godhead*; but the Doctor has ſhut the door, becauſe we muſt firſt know there is an *inviſible God*, before we can certainly know there is *a viſible world.*

2. How then will the Doctor prove there is a God? why, he tells us, *Orig. ſacr. book* 3. *cap.* 1. *p.* 367, 368, &c. We muſt have recourſe to an Idea: *A ſettled and conſiſtent Notion of a being that is abſolutely perfect, not* (as he ſays) *that there is any ſuch* connate Idea *in the ſoul, but that there is a faculty in the ſoul whereby upon the free uſe of* Reaſon, *it can form within it ſelf a ſettled Notion of ſuch a being, which is as perfect as it is poſſible for us to conceive a being to be.* Well then we muſt form a Notion of God from the *Uſe of Reaſon*: But ſeeing that all the proceſſes of Reaſon are from things *known to unknown*, or from *more known to leſs known*, where ſhall we place our engine? where ſhall we fix the firſt foot of the compaſs? where muſt Reaſon begin? muſt we begin with the perfections of the Creatures, to argue our ſelves into a belief of that God that made them, and therefore muſt need contain all their perfections in himſelf? this is that the Doctor has renounced; for we muſt firſt be ſure there is a God, before we can be ſure there is *any thing elſe*: I would begin with a *Flie*, an *Ant*, a *Muſhrome*, and from thence I would gradually climb

up

up to the *first Cause*, but the Doctor forbids us; for we have no assurance that there is such a *Fly*, *Ant*, or *Mushrome*, till we are first assured of a God: Must we then leave this way of reasoning, and search for something *before God*, *Co-ordinate with God*? the danger is, lest that which is *before God*, should prove the *true God*; or if any thing be *Co-ordinate* with God, there will be *two Gods*, *or none*.

Now this being once the judgment of the Reverend Doctor, and confirmed by him in his Dialogues, p. 269. where he appeals to his *Orig. Sacr.* for this very thing, I hope they will never more expect fuller proof for the warrantableness of our Nonconformity, than they require to prove the existence of God; and let them beware, lest whil'st they trample upon Conscience, where God has his Throne, they do not fight against him that sits thereon, and so bring Heaven and Earth about their ears.

2. Another thing collected is, *That it's endless to hope to give satisfaction to tender Consciences*; and therefore they resolve never to begin. And is it not as endless to give assent and consent to the Impositions, for who knows where they will end? By the same Reason they have imposed these, they may five hundred; but if the Distemper be endless, why should not the Remedy? The Apostle *Paul* gave satisfaction to tender Consciences, without ever fearing it would be endless. Men are for endless wealth, but not for endless trouble. Can any man think the primitive Christians had only a Lease of the Rule for Indulgence, during the Apostles Lives, and that they must Fine for it smartly, when the next Generation came up. How much better had it been to have been left to restraint, and absolute will during the Apostles times, with a reversion of liberty after their decease; than that the *14th Chapter* to the *Romans*, should be like the Ceremonial Law, to expire with the Apostles, and be buried in their Graves? There will be honest mistaken Souls to the worlds end, whom Christ thought not too bad to redeem; and whil'st there are such, the Church, unless She will be a Shrew, or a Stepmother, must take a tender care of them: But if it be so endless to satisfie these erring Consciences, leave 'em to God, he can do it; and he will either forbear them, in their ignorance, or give them knowledge, whom it might become those men a little to imitate, who call themselves his servants.

(3.) *That Scruple of Conscience is no protection against Schism.* Who says

ſays it is? It's only a Prohibition to afford Communion *in what* we ſcruple: Except when the things ſcrupled, and not ſcrupled, are ſo blended together, that we cannot ſwallow what appears lawful, but we muſt gorge that with it which appears otherwiſe; which has been the policy of ſome modern Impoſers, ſo artificially to mix the certain and the uncertain, the queſtionable with the unqueſtionable, that theſe ſcrupulous Conſciences cannot enjoy that wherein they are ſatisfied, except they will venture at that about which they are not ſo; ſo are *Private Bills* ſtitch'd with the *Publick ones*, that the more uſeful may ſell the other, which few elſe would regard: So have I ſeen idle Maſters delight themſelves to ſee their Children play at Bob-apple, where the poor young Raſcals would have been glad of a Bit, but were always prevented by the Candle.

(4) *That the Apoſtles, notwithſtanding the difference of mens judgments, did preſcribe Rules of Uniformity.* Well, but mark their proof; *Did not the Apoſtles bind the burden of* ſome neceſſary things *on the Churches, albeit there were in thoſe Churches gradual differences of light?* And will the Doctor infer hence a power to bind *unneceſſary burdens* upon the necks of Diſciples, becauſe the Apoſtles impoſed ſuch as were *neceſſary*? The Argument then concludes; If the Apoſtles, who were infallible, had power to impoſe *Neceſſaries*, much more may the Prelates impoſe *Unneceſſaries*, though they be fallible. But of theſe things thus much.

§ 3. Come we now to his third and laſt Propoſition, *A wilful Error, or miſtake of Conſcience, doth by no means excuſe from ſin.* Theſe things ſurely are oddly joined together; that a *wilful Error*, and a *miſtake of Conſcience*, ſhould be made the ſubject of one Propoſition: There may be a *miſtake* of Conſcience, where there's no *wilful* Error; *wilfulneſs* makes every Error double, obſtinacy being added to it; but a miſtake of ſimple ignorance, makes it not *half ſo great*, though it makes it not to become *nothing*: it may excuſe *à tanto*, though not *à toto*, and mollifie it a little, though not juſtifie it, nor nullifie it.

It will not excuſe from ſin! And yet p. 44. he moves this Queſtion, *What Error of Conſcience doth excuſe a man from ſin, in following the dictates of it?* If *no Error* will excuſe, why is the Queſtion put, *What Error will excuſe?* And if *ſome Error* will excuſe, why is the Propoſition laid down ſo looſely, and uncertainly? *A wilful Error or Miſtake will not excuſe from ſin.*

And

And upon this proposition, he makes a case. *If a man think himself bound to divide the Church by sinful separation, that separation is nevertheless a sin, for his thinking himself bound to do it*: which is one of the wildest cases that ever was put. For, 1. It may be justly questioned whether it be possible *for a Man in his wits to think himself bound to divide the Church by sinful separation*? A man may think himself *bound to separate*; and that separation may *possibly* be *sinful*; but he cannot think himself *bound to sinful separation*. He that is *bound is under a Law*; He that *thinks himself bound*, *thinks* himself *under a law*: but it Implies a broad contradiction, for a man to *think himself bound to sin*: because that implies, that he thinks himself *bound not to be bound*; or *under a law* to be *under no law*. A sort of men there are that think it *lawful to tell a Lie*, to avoid a great evil, to procure some great good. Yet none *ever* owned this principle that it was *lawful to sin*, to procure the one, or avoid the other: but they pretend that to *tell a Lie* in such a case under such circumstances is *no sin*. 2. I very much question whether ever any did think himself *bound to divide a Church*: he may possibly think himself bound to avoid it, but how should such a crotchet come in's head that he was bound to divide it: when the *Church of England* separated from *Rome*, did they think it their duty, to make divisions in it? 3. The instances that he gives are short or wide of his case by many leagues: *Paul thought himself bound to do many things against the Name of Jesus*: He did so, but not to do one thing that was sin: The *Jews* thought themselves *bound in Conscience to kill the Apostles*: True! but yet they thought not themselves bound to kill them sinfully: they wanted not pretences to justifie the cause to the World, nor untemper'd mortar to daub over their own Conscience; 'twas easie to say they were rebels against, traitors to the Emperor: An easie thing to cry out of heresie, and schism, and sects *every where spoken against*; nor wanted they a *Tertullus* who before *the Magistrates* and *Judges* could accuse *Paul* for *a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition*, and a *Ring-leader of a sect*: so that all the world sees and the poor dissenters *feel* the Truth of what the Dr. says, *men may do very bad things and yet think themselves bound in conscience to do them*: 4. Its freely granted by all the world, that *wilful error* (that is, *Interpretively* such, for no man can *formally* err *wilfully*:) *does not excuse from sin*: that is, what God has prohibited, no mans errour can make a duty; what God has commanded no mans errour can discharge him from obedience to it. Nor do we, or ever did we make Conscience a stalking horse for these ends.

And thus we have got through the three famous propositions, that should have cleared up the *objection*, and so answered to the second *Question*:

on: but what are we edified by all this discourse? or how do we understand either what we, or Church governours *must do*, in case we, or others *cannot come up to the established rule?* men are not justifiable *in not doing what they lawfully may do*: well but if they see not that may be lawfully done which may so? must they be left to God or no? *wilful error and mistake will not excuse from sin*: be it so! still *what must be done when men cannot come up to the established rule*? I confess, I am just as wise as I was! but this is the *Genius* of the Sermon: He propounds an enquiry? *p.* 15. *How far the obligation doth extend to comply with an established rule*? He shuts one thing out of the Question, then a second thing out of the Question; then excludes a third out of the Question, and at last shuts the Question out of doors, and it goes wandring up and down like a vagabond to this day: we never heard *one rule* to limit it: how far we are *not bound*; nor one assertion to explain it, how far we *are bound*, but as far as a man may conjecture by the Hum, and buz of the discourse; we are bound to comply to the uttermost extent with every established rule: Again, *p.* 36. He enquires, *what is to be done if men cannot come up to the established rule*? And he neither acquaints us, what we are to do: nor what the Magistrates are to do, nor what Church governours are to do, nor what the Rule is, nor who made it, but lays down a first, a second, a third proposition, and the Question is gone for *Jamaica*, or *Tangiers*, and fare it well!

But yet under this last proposition, there are some things contained which really deserve our most serious Consideration. As,

§. 1. He Infers from hence, that *men ought not to rest satisfied with the present dictates of their consciences, for notwithstanding them they may commit very great Sins*. Much less then ought men to rest satisfied with *the present dictates of other mens wills*, for notwithstanding them they may commit very great sins. Conscience is more my rule then the dictate of of any Church: and if I ought not to rest satisfied with that which God has made my *next and immediate* guide, I may the more lawfully examine their commands, which are *more remately* such. But I wonder what he would have men do? would he have us like the wandring Jew, ramble up and down for satisfaction, and never accept it? or to be *always learning, and never coming to the* stable and setled *knowledge of the Truth!* or *proving all things*, and *never holding fast that which is good?* Must we be of the *Pyrrhonian* Religion, *Academicks*, *Sceptick*, *Seekers?* or shall we for two or three years be of *no religion*, that we may be more Impartial in our Enquiries which is *the True*? There is something considerable in what the *Dr.* says, if he had made it out: If the Dictates of our Conscience brand such a practise *for evil*, which the generality of,

of ſober, pious, and knowing Chriſtians recommend as lawful, or a duty. It will become us to be jealous, leaſt any baſe luſt have bribed our judgments to paſs a falſe verdict upon that practice; and ſo in many other Caſes, but in the mean time we muſt refrain, and not act contrary to our preſent ſentiments; and if there be any practice which appears to me to be a duty from the Scripture, in which I have found the preſence of God with me, and the bleſſing of God upon me thereby; I ſhall ſtudy to be more confirm'd in it, and *reſt ſatisfied with my preſent dictates* about it, till ſome remarkable thing awaken me to a jealouſie, that its not ſo clear a matter as I have ſuppoſed it.

§ 2. But the Doctor *is afraid* (and ſo am I) *that the common miſtaking the Caſe of an erroneous Conſcience hath done a great deal of miſchief among men.* I wiſh he would ſtate it better then, next time, leſt the next Edition alter the Title, and call it the *Miſchief of Miſtating the Queſtion*! But where does the miſcheif on it lie? Oh, *the Queſtion is generally put, How far an erroneous Conſcience doth oblige!* and if they that propound it in thoſe terms, anſwer it as the Doctor did the other, *How farr we are bound to comply with an eſtabliſht Rule?* It had better never been ſtated nor ſtarted than thus anſwered.

To come a little nearer to him! Is the Doctor ſure the Queſtion is thus generally put. *How farr an erroneous Conſcience doth oblige?* I am very confident, its oftner put, *whether it do* at all *oblige or no?* And they generally determine in the negative, *Conſcientia erronea, ligat, ſed non obligat.* It *ties a man up* from acting, or may *urge him* to act, but can neither *oblige* him to do what God has forbidden, or to omit what God has made a duty. *The former* becauſe *we take* the voice and countermand of Conſcience to be Gods voice, and he that is prepared to act againſt that dictate, though it be not the voice of God, yet ſhews he was really prepared to have acted againſt it, if it had been ſo: And though it be the will of God we ſhould do what he has commanded, yet 'tis not the will of God, we ſhould do it with a reluctant, and tergiverſating Conſcience: The *latter* becauſe there can be no power ſuppoſed to be given by God againſt his own Laws; Nor *King, nor Keyſar*, nor *Kirk*, nor Conſcience can make that *lawful* which God has declared *ſinful*, nor render that *indifferent* which God has made *a duty.*

And therefore after all this oſtentation of Caſuiſtical learning, the Nonconformiſts are perfectly unconcern'd, further than to clear up what he has perplexed in this matter, and in ſhort they ſay. 1. That

A miſtaking Conſcience will tie up the Perſon from acting, with this difference, that where the thing is a duty, which Conſcience dictates to to be ſinful, he ought to *refrain his act*, but yet is not *guiltleſs in the ſight of God*: but if the thing be *in it ſelf indifferent*, Conſcience does not only lay an imbargo upon him and commands him not to ſtir one ſtep, one foot further, but will juſtifie him in the Aporetick poſture, against any power on earth, to whom he never gave a power to perplex Conſcience ſo far as to make that ſin, which in it ſelf is indifferent, and Conſcience judges ſinful. 2. They ſay, that where Conſcience dictates any thing to be *ſinful* which God has made *a duty*, though this erroneous Conſcience will not diſcharge the ſoul from the duty, yet the meaſure and degree of that ſinful forbearance is to be taken from, 1. The diligence or negligence which the miſtaken perſon has uſed to procure ſatisfaction in the mind of God in that particular. 2. From the frame of the heart towards God in other caſes, and particulars, as whether he makes Conſcience of obeying God in thoſe things, which he knows to be duties. 3. From the continuance in that omiſſion: for the affirmative precept of God, which has made *doing the thing* my duty, though it alwayes obliges yet does not oblige alwayes to be doing it; and therefore a Conſcience, which chains me up from duty for a day or week, when perhaps in that revolution, the duty may not recur, is not of ſuch guilt, as that which fetters me up from acting for ſuch a time, wherein the duty has offered it ſelf frequently to my obſervance: I ſay 'tis *not of ſuch guilt*. I dare not ſay 'tis of *no guilt*; becauſe the ineptitude of the ſoul to have done it, if it had recurred in that ſeaſon, may be culpable.

3. They ſay an erroneous Conſcience can never make that to become either lawful or a duty, which God has declared to be ſinful: Becauſe the Authority of God is greater than that of Conſcience, and can never in any Caſe be ſuperſeded by it. And becauſe *negative Precepts* alwayes bind, and bind to forbearance at all times and in all Caſes (except there be a relaxtion in the Law it ſelf, which in ſuch *Negatives*, whoſe matter is not *of its ſelf*, *and in its nature evil*, there may be) ſo that what God has made ſin, ſo far as he hath ſo made it, the ſoul is tyed up for ever from doing it.

4. They ſay that an erroneous Conſcience may ſo perplex and entangle the Soul with its interfereing dictates, either urging it to refrain as *ſinful*, what God has made *a duty*; where to refrain is ſinful, becauſe God has made it a duty; and *to act* is ſinful becauſe Conſcience repreſents it *as unlawful*; or preſſing to act where God has declared it to be ſin; in which Caſe to act muſt needs be ſin, becauſe God

God has prohibited it: and to refrain is ſinful, becauſe Conſcience tells the Soul it muſt act: And I know not what ſuch a miſerable Creature may expect, Except firſt, That God may pity it, though erroneous, if ſincere; For ſincerity is more in the ſight of him who deſires truth in the inward parts than Orthodoxy: and he ſees the general frame of the heart to be upright, becauſe it would omit nothing which it takes to be duty, though in the application of the general frame of heart to this or that particular practice it may be out moſt wretchedly. 2. That men ought exceedingly to pity an erroneous Conſcience, both becauſe they may need the ſame commiſeration, they may be tempted, they are of the ſame frail Conſtitutions, and obnoxious to the like infirmities, but eſpecially if that errour do viſibly ariſe from an evil Conſtitution of body, being naturally melancholick, or from evil education, where the Errour has been ſuckt in with the Mothers milk, or the general prevailing of ſome erroneous principle in the Age which has tinctured and miſled Conſcience, ſeeing its much more eaſie to ſcoffe, jeer, and revile at an erroneous Conſcience than to direct, inform, and heal it. And none are more unmerciful cenſurers of a miſtaken Conſcience, than they that never knew the worth of a truly tender Conſcience of their own.

When therefore the Doctor tells us. That *Conſcience alters not the Nature of good and evil in things*, that *what God hath made a ſin, or a duty remains ſo, what ever a mans Conſcience doth judge concerning them*: He brings us no new diſcovery; no extraordinary revelation, but that common doctrine of all Caſuiſts; all the fault of it is, That its impertinent to the matter in hand, for he is or ſhould be inquiring what Power Conſcience may challenge about an *eſtabliſht Rule* of *Mans making*, and ſuch for which they have neither general nor particular warrant from God ſo to make.

§ 3. The Doctor informs us, *That the moſt material queſtion in the Caſe of an erroneous Conſcience is: What error of Conſcience doth excuſe a man from ſin?* which was ſeaſonably remembred, ſince p. 42. He layes it down as a Rule, That *willfull errour or miſtake doth by no means excuſe from ſin.* If a miſtake will *by no means* excuſe, I wonder *what error or miſtake* can do it? He anſwers by an approved diſtinction. between *involuntary Error*, cauſed by *invincible ignorance*; and *willful errour*, when the judgment is formed by *paſſion, prejudice, intereſt*: Now that which I ſhall take notice of here, is only the explication of his Terms and Notions.

1. *An Error wholly involuntary*, is when its cauſed by *invincible Ignorance*, or *after uſeing the beſt meanes, for due information of his Conſcience:* Thus the Doctor has determined; and thus we aſſume: But the Errors of the diſſenters (if they be errors) in not complying with the controverted matters, are *wholly involuntary*, cauſed by *invincible Ignorance* not being conſcious to themſelves that they have neglected *the beſt* or *any good meanes* for the better information of their Conſciences; They have read the Scriptures, they have ſtudied the controverſies, as they have been ſtated by learned men both in the beginning, and progreſs of the reformation; they have managed *friendly*, and *unfriendly debates*, conferences, diſputations with men of all perſwaſions; they have earneſtly prayed to God not to ſuffer them to be miſtaken in a matter of ſo great moment, they have implored his direction, what he would have them to do or ſuffer, and ſee no reaſon hetherto to alter their judgments or practiſes, and therefore hope the Doctor will become their ſecurity againſt wilfulneſs of error; and that *their Act, though it may be a fault in its ſelf* (which yet they do not beleive) *ſhall not be imputed to them as ſin.* And now whereas formerly they would have been content, that any Act of theirs, if erroneous, might have been pardoned in the number of their ſins of ignorance, upon a general repentance, though there had been ſome guilt in it; The Doctor has exceedingly obliged them, and to their ſingular comfort aſſured them, that *their Act* (ſo qualified as before) *ſhall not be Imputed to them as ſin:* So that things are ſomewhat better with them then they looked for, and they will returne the Doctor their humble and hearty thanks, for his good Doctrine, which makes them need *no Abſolution*, where there is *no imputation.*

I only adde, that whoever pleads for mercy and Indulgence to an erroneous Conſcience (if honeſt and upright) muſt be preſumed to do it Impartially, and can be no Intereſt of his own, for no man can Judge his own Conſcience to be actually Erroneous; which plea ought to be accepted with Readineſs by all the Sons of Men, ſince no man can be abſolutely certain but he may have at leaſt in ſome particulars an Erroneous Conſcience: Nor yet will this deſtroy the diſtinction of *voluntary*, and *Involuntary Error*; for though no Error is *formally voluntary*, yet may it be ſo by *Interpretation*: that is, though he that miſtakes in any point of Doctrine, doth not, cannot willingly erre, yet may he have contracted that error by ſuch ſinful courſes, that God will charge the guilt upon him as if he had willfully run into any other ſin.

2. Let

(2.) Let us therefore in the next place, hear the Doctors explication of a *wilful error* of Conſcience. *If* (ſays he) *they form their judgments rather by paſſion, and prejudice, and intereſt, than from the laws of good or juſt Rules of Conſcience; if they do not examine things fairly on both ſides praying for Divine Direction, if they have not patience to hear any thing againſt their Opinion: but run on blindly and furiouſly, they may in ſo doing act according to their Conſciences, and yet be in as great danger of committing heynous ſins as St.* Paul *and the Jews were:* which Doctrine of his being true in the main as it lies in *Theſi*, will need the leſs of animadverſion upon it: yet muſt I ſay. 1. That his disjunctive; [If they form their judgements rather by prejudice, then from the *laws of God* or *other juſt rules* of conſcience] inſinuates a piece of their Modern Divinity, *viz.* that there are *other juſt rules* of conſcience, then *Gods Law*, which is a Notion we cannot admit of without better evidence: we would gladly know where thoſe *other juſt Rules* are to be found? muſt we ſeek them in Canons, and Conſtitutions Eccleſiaſtical? whether then are *all ſuch*, or only *ſome* of them ſuch *juſt rules*? If onely *ſome of them*: which are they? and by what characteriſtical marks may we diſtinguiſh them? but if *all be ſo*; then muſt we acquieſce in all the Canons, decrees, reſcripts and Rules that were ever made by any Counſel or convocation; and why then did not the Church of *England* reſt ſatisfied with thoſe rules, which were given her before the Reformation? 2. We muſt needs ſay, that if the Diſſenters do examine things fairly on both ſides, praying for Divine Direction and have had a world of patience to boot, to hear any thing againſt their Opinion, though never ſo weak in Reaſon, and ſtrong in paſſion; (which they profeſs before the ſearcher of all hearts they have done, and continue ſtill to do,) they muſt be diſcharg'd before all the world that ſhall take cognizance of their cauſe, and hear their pleas, of any wilful or voluntary error: And for the ſuggeſtion that they *form their judgments from prejudice, paſſion, and intereſt*; they dare not judge of other men, contenting themſelves to have averred their own innocency, when the temptation viſibly lies on the other ſide.

§. 4. For a Concluſion: The *Dr.* would apply the charge of a *wilfully erroneous* Conſcience to the Diſſenters. *If men* (ſays he) *through the power of an erroneous Conſcience may think themſelves bound to make ſchiſms,—— to diſobey Laws, to break in pieces the Communion of the Church, they may ſatisfie themſelves that they purſue their Conſciences, and yet for want of due care of informing themſelves—— thoſe actions may be wilful, and damnable ſins.* But we think not our ſelves bound to

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any ſuch wickedneſs; There are enow that think themſelves bound t do that without our aſſiſtance; enow beſides us to perpetuate the cauſe of our diviſions, and to entail contentions upon Innocent poſterity whoſe teeth muſt be ſet on Edge with the ſowre grapes their Fathers have eaten; but if any ſhall think themſelves bound through the power of an Erroneous Conſcience to make unjuſt Rules of Conſcience, when tis Impoſſible they ſhould make one *de novo* that is juſt, and thereby break the Church in peices, they may think what they pleaſe, that they are purſueing their juſt rights to impoſe upon other mens Conſciences, and ſatisfying their own, and yet for want of a due care to inform themſelves better in their duty, the extent of their power, and the ends for which it was given, be guilty in the ſight of God of willful and damnable ſins, as bad as thoſe of the *Jews*, who thought they did God good Service, when they perſecuted, and murtherd his faithful Servants.

SECTION IX.

A conſideration of thoſe Aſſertions of the Doctor. If Communion with the Church be *lawful* it will in time be judged *a duty. And*, If occaſional Communion, *be* lawful, *its hard to underſtand that* conſtant Communion *ſhould not be* a duty.

I Find the Doctor ever, and anon inſinuating that what is *lawful to be done*, upon ſome account or other *ought to be done*: Which if it be *univerſally true*, will take away the difference between merely lawful, and neceſſary, at leaſt as to uſe and practice, ſince it implies that whatever is lawful may be made conſtantly and fixedly a duty: If it were only aſſerted that what is *merely lawful* might through a concurrence of circumſtances *pro hic & nunc*, become a duty, as it would do this cauſe no ſervice, ſo neither would it meet with our oppoſition: But to be thus laid down in general without further explication, needs a little conſideration, and ſo in this caſe, that which otherwiſe had been but lawful, will be incumbent on me as my duty. Two expreſſions I find worthy our Notice:

1. *I do not queſtion but in time if they find it* (Communion in prayers and Sacraments) *lawful, they will judge it to be their duty.* Now becauſe we have ever thought that what was *lawful and merely ſo*, ſtood

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in the midst between *sinful* and *necessary*; forbidden, and Commanded, it deserves some care and pains to dive into the Mystery of it, how, or why these lawfulls may become determined to one side of their extremes or termes, between which they formerly stood neuters. And by what we can gather from his discourse, it must be one of these things.

1. That whatever we judge lawful to be done in any case, *for peace sake* will become a duty to be alwayes done. For he tells us, p. 31. 32. *There's nothing Christ and his Apostles have charged more upon the Consciences of Christians, then studying to preserve peace and unity among Christians*: To which pupose the Doctor quotes us several places of Scripture, which it is needless here to repeat, seeing none ever yet denied the study of peace to be a very great, and manifest duty. But if it be *charg'd on the Consciences of all Christians to study to preserve peace*: We hope they find the charge upon their Consciences also, for they are *Christians*. Have they then studyed the things that make for peace? I mean not *their own*, but the peace of all the Christians in the Nation: A little study would have discovered the *means*, had they been as they pretend such passionate Lovers of the end. What expedients have they then found out by all their study, or what expedients will they accept that others have studied, and found out, to releive and procure peace so far as its lost? to preserve peace so far as it yet remaines? and to further peace so far as it may be attainable in the Imperfect state of this life? what will they part with to purchase it? will they step over one straw? remove one stumbling block that lies in the way of it? will they wave the least of their pretensions? or condescend to others in the smallest of their desires? will they promise to reforme our Rubrick, that one Rule for *finding out* Easter *for* ever, when it would not find it out *for*, but proved it self Erroneous *in*, almost half seven years? will they forbear to exact our Assent and consent to a known falshood for that excellent thing, which they so much predicate, Peace? The matter is slight! yet if an Error, they can more easily forgoe it then we avow it: we know not why we should tell the smallest lie for peace, if they will not part with one: Nay tell us what thing so Inconsiderate, so minute, which all our humble Petitions for peace could procure the relaxation of? And yet these are the Men that boast themselves highly of their burning zeal for peace! To be an Advocate for peace, is an office of good credit, but I cannot tell what to think on't, when I am pressed so earnestly and heartily to feed lustily on that Dish, of which my Inviter will not taste: but the Doctor

and the Reader will expect other Answers, and that whatever becomes of others we do clear our selves: 1. Then, we will acknowledge that what we can *lawfully do*, we *ought to do* for *peace sake*, when peace will certainly be obtained from them, by doing what we can lawfully do: but if the doing all we lawfully can, will not be accepted as the condition of peace, to what end should we stretch our selves, and straine our uttermost powers to reach that which can never be reacht? I will part with much of my right, deny my self in what I may lawfully do, to buy my peace at the hands of a vexatious Neighbour; but if all that I can lawfully do will not purchase it, *Its better saved than ill spent*: For an Indifferent thing, that becomes good, as it tends to a good end, will yet be no good thing again, but return into its old box of Indifferents, when it tends not to that good end: Nay that which is in its *general nature* a duty, as relating to such an excellent end, yet ceases to be a duty, nay becomes a sin, when its applied to no-such end: *An oath* is a part of worship, and so far a duty; the end of an assertory Oath is *to put an end* to *Controversies*, to *procure peace* among men; but if an Oath of that sort be used where it cannot put an end to the controversy, it becomes sinful, as *taking the name of God in vain*. 2. We acknowledge that what we *lawfully* can do for *peace sake*, that we *ought* to do: But withal we affirm that we *actually* do it, and do it *as our duty* to; for suppose I find it lawful in general to hear a sound pious Conformable Minister preach the Gospel; when circumstances meet together to call me out to go, I do it under the strict Notion of duty: And they that find it lawful to Communicate in the prayers, and Sacraments, and the Church, do judge they are doing a duty in such communion: There must then be something else that the Doctor would have, if we could get out the secret; which his next Magisterial assertion perhaps may discover: 3. They that judge it *lawful*, nay their *duty* to hold Communion with the Church, *in prayer and Sacraments*, yet neither think it their *duty* nor *lawful* to joyne with one Church to deprive them of the lawfulness, and duty of joyning with other Churches: least whilst they press after *positive duty*, they should neglect a *Comparative duty*: for seeing they judge it a duty to joyne with the parochial Churches for peace sake, and to joyne with others Churches also for the same end, they shew a more true and Catholick Spirit for a general peace amongst all Christians, then they whose Narrow straight laced Souls, only designe a peace within the limits of their own Constitutions. And, 4. If it be true, that what we may *lawfully do* without sin, we *ought to do as our duty*; why

may

may not others turn the inference thus; That seeing its lawful to joyn with the separate Churches without the guilt of schism, it will be a *duty also* so to joyn: for these that think the one lawful, think the other lawful also: and as the argument holds on one side, it will hold on the other with equal force. Nay, 5. *With more*; for those persons against whom this argument is brought from their own judgment of the lawfulness of joyning, do judge it a more clear case that its lawful to joyn with those other meetings, which are more near the word of God, in worship and discipline, and where the dubious Conditions of Communion are not found to raise scruples about the lawfulness of Communion with them, which in other places cannot but sometimes occur. Nor will those external, accidental advantages, which one side has got above the other vary the case, seeing 'tis the intrinsick merits of the cause, that conscience regards in forming a right judgement about its duty. And let thus much serve for an Answer.

(2.) Yet I rather think, there's a further meaning in his words, which we poor heedless, sleepy Creatures little dream of: *I do not question, but* in time, *if they find it lawful they will judge it to be their duty.* In time? yes! all in good time? that is, when they have preacht up the Magistrate to a due height for persecution; and alarm'd the Nation with another Presbyterian Plot; or retrieved that of *Ax*-yard, and the Meal-Tub; when they have rallied up the whole Legion of Informers, and once more given us a specimen of ecclesiastical Grace in driving us out of our houses into prisons, *then is the time*, when we shall all find it a duty to conform. I have no great Reason to be confident of my self, and, I hope, I know my own heart a little better than to trust it, nor can I tell whether one terrour may not make me think that *Lawful*, which I never so thought before, and the next make me think it *a duty*; a man is ready enough to stretch his Conscience rather than an halter; there's no such *feeling conviction*, like that of the Statute; nine and fifty dull arguments and one *sharp sword*, will create a good title to the seventeen Provinces: It may be then *in time* we shall find it *a duty*, that is, a duty not to God, or our Consciences, but to our Carcasses, and other duty upon this account is not yet discovered.

(3) But the most probable intendment of this Paradox is: That *if we* find such Communion *lawful*, the intervening *authority of the Magistrate* will turn the scale, and make it *a duty*: To this I shall not need to say much, because so far as we judge Communion lawful be-

fore the Command of the Magiſtrate, ſo far we do judge it to be a duty under due circumſtances, and no further can we judge it to be either lawful or a duty, when the Magiſtrates command has had its moſt operative influence, either upon the things themſelves, or our Conſciences, yet theſe things we take to be clear. 1. That where Communion with the Church would have been ſinful under all its circumſtances, no command of the Magiſtrate can make it lawful. 2. That no command of the Magiſtrate can diſcharge a Chriſtian from that duty which he owes his proper Paſtor, or that particular Church whereof he is a member according to Gods Word. 3. That the Magiſtrate has power from God to enforce all his Chriſtian ſubjects to live peaceably among themſelves, and puniſh them that do otherwiſe, but not to deſtroy that for which Peace is deſirable, namely the leading a *quiet* and ſecure life *in all godlineſs and honeſty*, for *he is the Miniſter of God to us for our good*, and not for our ruine, 13 *Rom.* 4.

§ 2. A ſecond uncouth paſſage of the Doctors is that of *page* 56. *Its hard to underſtand* if occaſional Communion be lawful; that conſtant Communion *ſhould not be a duty:* I perceive he is ſomewhat hard of underſtanding, eſpecially of thoſe things that he has no mind to. In the former diſcourſe he argues from the *lawfulneſs* of Communion to the *neceſſity:* but here alſo from *occaſional* to *conſtant* Communion. To which confident aſſertion of his we Oppoſe this, *Occaſional* communion with a particular Church may be *lawful*, when yet *conſtant fixed ſtated* Communion may not be *a duty*: which we prove. 1. From their own Doctrines and practiſes. Their Canons have made it the duty of every individual member of their Church, to hold conſtant Communion with his own pariſh Church and Teacher, and yet they allow *occaſional* Communion with other pariſh Churches. A journey will make occaſional Communion with a remote Congregation *lawful*, but they will hardly perſwade us that they can make it *our duty*, to take ſuch journeys in order to ſuch communion: If the great Bell rings at the next pariſh to a *Lecture Sermon*, or chimes all in to *Divine Service*, when we have none of thoſe at home, 'tis lawful to take the occaſion without coming under a conſtant obligation to it: The diſſenters crave the ſame equity; they ſay they are under an obligation ordinarily, fixedly, ſtatedly, conſtantly to worſhip God in thoſe congregations whereof they are members, they ſay they can readily joyn with other congregations as they have opportunity, but they cannot admit the inference, that becauſe they may *occaſionally* that therefore they muſt *conſtantly* practiſe it: becauſe *Acts of worſhip* have a larger extent then *Church relation*;

lation; *those* may be performed and yet *these* remain sacred, and inviolate. 2. Some *conforming Ministers* and Christians judge it lawful to hold communion *occasionally with the dissenters*, in prayer and preaching, what a rare argument has the *Dr.* furnisht us with to prove it their constant duty; and from *once hearing* lawfully, to prove it an incumbent duty to hear them *for ever*. 3. It may be lawful occasionally to step in, and hear a very weak preacher, perhaps one that is vicious in his life, or unsound in some points of Doctrine, when we can hear no other, will it follow that we are bound, or that any power on earth can bind us to hear such constantly, when God has made better provision for our souls, and we want only grace to accept it. 4. How many have judg'd it lawful to go *to a play* or the Chappel at *Sommersethouse*, *occasionally*, who yet think that *twenty Acts of Parliament* cannot make either of them *a constant duty*. 5. And how unwilling are most men to be argued into *duty* from the meer *lawfulness* of the thing; The *Dr.* thinks it *lawful* to resign one of his preferments to some worthy person that has none, and yet his own argument will hardly convince him 'tis *his duty*: It seems very *lawful* for him that is almost melted with *two coats* to part with one to his brother thats almost naked, and yet we despair of success in thus arguing with him: Nay it were well if some men would be perswaded that *plain duty*, when it crosses worldly interest is *duty*, and we should the better bear with them in denying every thing *lawful* to be duty. And, 6. If all *lawful things* may be converted into *duty*, and what is *occasionally indifferent*, may be turn'd into *constant necessity*, then farewel *Christian liberty*, and let man hereafter eternally mourn, or dance to the Musick of his fetters.

SECTION X.

Of terms of Communion required by the Church, whether upon the same Reason that some of them are Imposed, the Church may not also impose some Use of Images, Circumcision, *and the* Paschal Lamb?

WE hear every day eloquent Orations in praise of peace and Union; smart declamations against separation, but we seldom hear of the *fatal terms* which obstruct the one, or may justifie the other: I shall not tire the Reader with a tedious enumeration of the particular conditions, but shall content my self to have named *One*, though

though I discontent some others that I have *no more*, and some will find themselvs aggrieved that I have named *that one*: It is the use of *the sign of the Cross in baptism* which I intend, and have therefore singled out *that one*, because it is number'd amongst the *three innocent Ceremonies*, and because 'tis imposed both on the *Ministers* to practice it, and *the people* to de dicate their Children to God by it.

(1). And here I ask what Reason can be assigned for the use of *this sign*, as it signifies *Christs cross*, and *him crucified* thereon, as it is the symbol of a persons *dedication to Christ and his service*, but what will equally justifie the Religious use of *a crucifix* set up in the Church for the same use, and purposes?

This sign of the cross is instituted by the Church. First as *a memorial of Christs cross*; Secondly, as *a Symbol whereby a person is dedicated to him who died the death of the cross*. Thirdly, as *a token that he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the Devil, to continue Christs faithful servant and soldier to his lives end*. That these are the ends and uses of that sign, is expressly owned, by the *Canons* of 1603. and the *office of baptism in the Liturgy*: Now why the image of Christ upon the Cross, or a Crucifix, may not be used for these ends, upon the same Reason, nay upon somewhat better reason, we are yet to seek: for if a sign may be used to these ends to make impression upon our minds of those spiritual truths, duties, and mercies, the *fixed visible Image* will much better do the work then the *transient, and scarce visible* sign of a cross made in the Air with the finger. That the Papists do use the Image of Christ upon the Cross as an *immediate* though not *ultimate object* of Adoration is true; and it is as true, that the Church of *England* does not use the sign of the Cross, nor is it by us charg'd to use it for that end: but yet, as there is an inferiour use of the *Crucifix*, to be the *Lay-mans bornbook* to teach him to spell out a *crucified Christ*; and a *Covenanting use*, to initiate Converts in the profession of the Gospel; and an *obliging use* to engage them to serve their Redeemer; so there can be no solid reason given why such lower uses of an *Image or Crucifix* may not be introduced, but what will equally militate against our use of the Cross.

2. What Reason can be alledged why *circumcision* may not be imposed as a tearm of Union or Communion, to signify *the circumcision of the heart*, as well as the sign of the Cross to signifie *faithfulness and perseverance* in the service of Christ? To the *Jews* indeed it was a badge of their duty to *keep the whole law*. Gal. 3. 4. And such use would now be apparently

gently ſinful, but ſuppoſe it were enjoyned for no other end than as the *ſurplice* to denote *purity*; *kneeling* at the Sacrament, to ſignifie *humility*, the *ſign of the Croſs* to repreſent *courage*, *and conſtancy*, ſo this *circumciſion* to ſtir up our dull ſouls to conſider of the *circumciſion of the heart*, what greater ſuperſtition in *this*, then in *thoſe*? Eſpecially when the Apoſtle has given our fruitful invention ſuch fair hints, *how apt* it is to be drawn into ſignificativeneſs. 2 *Rom.* 29. *Circumciſion is that of the heart.* Nay when he openly avows, that Chriſtians are *the circumciſion*, 3 *Phil.* 3. upon which myſtick grounds the Church of *Abaſſia* practiſes this Ceremony to this day. It is confeſt that in the Church of the *Jews*, circumciſion had *a typical uſe*, which is now unlawful to be retained, as a denyal that Chriſts being come in the fleſh. But as we have, or pretend to have ſcraped and ſcowered away the *Idolatrous and ſuperſtitious* uſes of thoſe ceremonies which we borrowed from the *Romiſh* Church, why can we not purge away *the Judaical uſe* of Circumciſion too, and borrow one poor Ceremony at leaſt from that Church, as well as the other from *Rome*?

3. What reaſon can be given why we may not together with the *Lords Supper* uſe a *Roaſted Lamb with bitter herbes*, not to ſignifie Chriſt to come which was *the typical uſe*, but Chriſt already come, and ſlain, which is the Symbolical uſe; ſince the Apoſtle has given us a hint for that alſo; 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us*: The Papiſts who underſtand well how far their principles will lead them, have not ſcrupled this uſe of it, for granting them a power to impoſe *outward viſible ſignes of inward and inviſible grace*, mercy and duty, what ſhould hinder then from turning the *Paſchal Lamb* into a *ſignificant Ceremony*? *Mounſieur Lortie* in his Treatiſe of the *Supper*, part. 1. c. 6. b. Informs us that the *Greek* Church upbraided the *Roman*, that formerly they never uſed the *Supper* upon *Eaſter day*, without a *Lamb*: And he quotes a good Author for his voucher. Mr. *d' Autenil.* Who thus informes us. Suger *reports how that Pope* Innocent *the* 2*d*, *being at the* Abbey *of Saint* Dennis, *upon an* Eaſter day, *after all things were prepared according to the order of the Roman Church, he ſacrificed the moſt Holy victim of the* Paſchal Lamb, *and when the Maſs was ended they then did eat that material and real Lamb.* And why not? if the Church may *judge* what is decent, orderly, edifiying, fit to teach, *and ſtir up the mind of man by ſome notable ſignification*, and *Impoſe* what it ſo judges to be, as a tearm and condition of Communion with her, what ſhould hinder her to proceed, and bring in the *Paſchal Lamb* too, for, *the more the Merrier*; and (which ſeldome holds), *the better chear* alſo.

SECTION

SECTION. XI.

The *Application.* And *first*, To *those in Communion with the Church.*

NOthing *now remains*, as the Doctor thinks, *but application*; and perhaps it may be so, nothing for us *to Read*, because we have read all the rest; but upon my word there remains a great deal more, for the Doctor to do than he has yet done, unless he can satisfie himself to have done just nothing: Here are several Propositions to be proved, his own Questions to be answered, and many things upon the score not wiped off; yet let us hear his *Application*, which is alwayes either the best or the worst part of a Sermon.

He begins with a word of Advice to those *That continue in Communion with the Church*. That *they would walk by the same Rule, and mind the same things.* For *whilest we keep to one Rule all people know what 'tis to be of our Church.*

Here then are *two sorts of Persons*, both supposed to be in Communion with the Church: First *The super-Conformists*, who out-run Canon, Convocation, Rubrick, and are got as far as *Calice* before some of their Brethren can reach *Canterbury*. The second of *Subter-Conformists*, who jogging on their own pace, neither the high-trot, nor the Tantivey, are almost run out of distance; the former are for the high Notion of Canon-Prayer, the other form their own Conceptions in their own expressions, in Prayer both before and after Sermon; these again are so stiffe in their Hams, they will not bend at the naming the word *Jesus*, but others are so supple in the joynts, they are ready to buckle at the name of *Judas*: Some are got into the high strains of the Organ, above Canon, against Homilies, others content themselves with the plain song of the old Metre; and from hence. 1. *Quære* whether *super-conformity*, and *subter-conformity*, *overdoeing* the Rule and underdoing it, excesses, and defects in reference to the same Canon, be not a real Schism in the bowells of the Church?

2. *Quære.* If so; which faction is it that makes Schismatick? If the Gallopers, why are they not then declared Schismaticks from the press and Pulpit? Is it for fear they should lose such zealots from their party? or are they ashamed to condemn others, for what they practice themselves? or is it because these Sinners are *too good*, *too bad*, or *too great to be told of their faults*: But if the *halting Conformists* be the Schismaticks, how comes it to pass that only *defects* are Sins, and yet *excesses* are such vertues? why is it, that a man may advance towards *Rome*, and yet be no Schismatick, but yet one step towards *Geneva* makes him a damnable one;

one; that it would be no crime to *out-run* the Conſtable, but to *hang back*, and give him the ſlip, when he would drag him to the Stocks, is ſuch a heinous one?

Quære 3. Whether if they can relax the Rule of Severity, or exercile the Rule of Charity towards their own brethren, to ſave them from being Schiſmaticks, they might not ſtrain a little farther to ſave the reſt of the Nation?

Quære 4. If it be true, that *while all keep to one Rule, all people know what it is to be of the Church of England*, Mr. *B.* will not be as far to ſeek, as ever he was to underſtand, *what the Church of* England *is*; when he cannot but ſee by mens practiſes, they either walk by *no Rule*, or *Twenty*; and when a punctual Conformiſt neither exceeding, nor coming ſhort of the Rule, is like that *Temperamentum ad pondus*, which unleſs in ſome Philoſophical Noddle, never yet had any real exiſtence.

Quære 5. If (as the Doctor ſays) it be *Indiſcretion* only, and ſome *peccadillo*, to go *beyond the Rule*, a good nature might not allow it to be *Indiſcretion* too, and no more, in thoſe that fall below the Rule? It may be demonſtrated, that *ten degrees* of *Northern Latitude* varies no more from the *Equinox*, than as many degrees of *Southern Latitude*: But the miſery is, *Titius* ſhall be a *Saint* for the ſame thing for which *Sempronius* is a *Raſcal*; and let him fly never ſo high above the Canon, he's but *indiſcreet*; when-as let him lag never ſo little behind it, he's a notorious Schiſmatick.

Nevertheleſs Conformiſts muſt own it to be wholeſome counſel which he gives them and himſelf, *Let us take heed we do not give too much occaſion to our enemies, to think the worſe of our Church for our ſakes.* Moſt excellent counſel it had been, had he defined critically what *occaſion is too much*, what *too little*, and what *juſt enough* to make men think evil of the Church. And his old Queſtioning method might have here been ſeaſonably revived; *How far we may, or may not give occaſion to enemies to think worſe of the Church:* but we never expect an Anſwer of theſe hot-ſcalding queſtions: *occaſion* may be given, and *much* occaſion, but too much occaſion muſt not; for *too much is too much*; and therefore whatever that may be, take heed of it.

This *advice* was firſt deſign'd for thoſe *that continue in Communion with the Church*; but by ſome unhappy accident or other, it's turn'd into *a word of reproof*, nay of *reproach* to thoſe that are out of it. In times of common infection, they ſay, all diſeaſes turn to the Plague; and in the univerſal paroxiſm of railing at Diſſenters, even Sermons that

ſhould be *Remedies*, turn into the diſeaſe of railing: But what have the Nonconformiſts to do with the Exhortation given to the Conformiſts? even as much as the Doctor had to do to preach againſt them at *Guild-Hall* Chappel. But let us hear their crime however; *They blame* (ſays he) *the Government; but if themſelves were in place, or thoſe they love or eſteem, then the Government had been a very good thing: thus do mens judgments vary as their intereſts do.* As if a Weathercock ſhould preach from the top of the Steeple one day, *What Charter has Chriſt given the Church to bind men up to more than he has done?* Iren. Epiſ. p. 8. And the next day ſhould tell us, that *what is lawful may be made a duty*; and then I am ſure the Church has power to bind us up to more than Chriſt ever did: yet it ſeems, if the Nonconformiſts might have been all made Biſhops, they had liked Epiſcopacy well enough; for my own part, I like it ſo well, that where there's one Biſhop, I wiſh there were five hundred; and yet I have heard of ſome that might have worn the *Miter*, but that they would not purchaſe *repentance ſo dear*: But he goes on! *We find uniformity and order condemn'd as tyrannical, till men come in place themſelves, and then the ſame things are very good*: Where the Doctor found this, except in *Panciroll de rebus perditis*, I cannot imagine; I never heard *Uniformity condemn'd as tyrannical*: but the rigorous forcing of Chriſtians to an affected uniformity in humane crotchets; an uniformity in practiſe, without uniformity in judgment. If all mens feet were of the ſame ſize, I ſhould never complain if their ſhooes were made of the ſame Laſt: but to pinch a foot of the ſlovens twelves, into a ſhooe of the childrens three-, is to put conſcience into the ſhoomakers ſtocks, which next to thoſe of Biſhop *Bonners* Colehole, are the worſt one can ſit in: Nor do we abhor *Order*, but *Innovations* introduced under that ſpecious title; nor did I ever find that the Nonconformiſts were in the Biſhops *Thrones*, though ſome odd fellows got into their *Lands*; without which, perhaps *neither one ſide nor other* would be very ambitious of the *places*.

Let the Doctor then take an *occaſion*, or *no occaſion*, little or great, to revile us; to miſrepreſent us, I am ſure his brethren are beholden to us, for by our means they have ſcaped a fine ſcowring; and the edg of that Reproof which ſeem'd to bear hard upon the Conformiſts, is turn'd directly againſt us, which the Doctor might have forborn for two Reaſons; the one, that there were none out of Communion with the Church to hear his Juniper-Lecture; and the other, becauſe he promiſed to read them their leſſon by themſelves, which they now are expecting.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

The Doctors Conſiderations conſidered.

HE that had ſcarce half a word to thoſe *in Communion* with the Church, who were *preſent*, has for thoſe that are *out of the Churches Communion*, though at the time *abſent:* Firſt a *Squadron of Conſiderations*; and ſecondly, *a Pacquet of Advices.* His Conſiderations are now to be conſidered, which are preciſely four.

(1.) The firſt thing we are to conſider, is, *How many things muſt be born in the Conſtitution of a Church?* A world, no doubt in ſome Conſtitutions, by thoſe that are ambitious of their Communion. Now that we may not be in arrere in civility, we humbly deſire all thoſe whom it may concern to conſider: 1. What our conſideration will ſignifie, unleſs we had a Commiſſion of *Terminer* as well as *Oyer?* If we might *bear* what we could, and forbear what we could not, it might be worth the while to conſider what muſt be born: but if the Impoſers will conſider what they pleaſe to lay on our ſhoulders, and we have no conſideration left us, but whether we will bow or break under the burden, what place for conſideration? 2. We deſire it may be conſidered alſo, what may be forborn by them, as well as born by us; and that in order to Peace and Union: but it's plain, they are all for our *bearing*, and nothing for their own *forbearing*; which yet had been more proper to his Text, had he conſidered that it is the will of God that they that have *not attained* to the ſame ſtrength, ſhould not be charged with the ſame burden. 3. It ought to be conſidered alſo, how many things may *not be born*, as well as how many *muſt*; for when the Intolerable are removed, we ſhall the better bear the reſt; but if we muſt bear *either all, or none*; to what purpoſe is our Conſideration? 4. We have conſidered again and again, both the *tolerabiles & intolerabiles Ineptias*; which I Engliſh the *tolerable and intolerable unfitneſſes*, and know not how to bear either of them. And 5. it's more our intereſt to conſider how we may get ſtrength to bear the *diſpleaſure of the Impoſers*,

than *the load of the Impoſitions*, ſeeing we could eaſily avoid the one, if we could but eſcape the other. 6. We deſire it may be conſidered a little, that there are different degrees of ſtrength in Chriſtians, all have not the ſame Bajulatory backs, nor the ſame Herculean ſhoulders; and therefore it might become Church-Governours to ſit down and conſider, whether it be agreeable to the mind of Chriſt, that the weak ſhould bear the Imperious paſſions of the ſtrong, and not the *ſtrong bear the infirmities of the weak*, Rom. 15. 1.

(2.) The Doctor would have us conſider, *how impoſſible it is to give ſatisfaction to all.* We have conſidered that too! and hope he will conſider whether there may not be found a *Medium* between *giving ſatisfaction to all, and to none.* Methinks this might ſatisfie all, if they that are ſo zealous for Ceremonies might have their belly-fulls of 'em; and they that are more indifferent for 'em, might not have 'em cram'd down their throats. He was reputed a wiſe Countrey-Juſtice in his time, who ſatisfied all his Neighbours contending about the old Ceremony of *Chaucers Ale-ſtake*, and determined it thus: Neighbours! you that are for a *May-pole*, ſhall have a *May-pole*; and you that are for *no May-pole*, ſhall have *no May-pole.* Chriſtians that have out-grown their Juvenile-vanities, can be ſatisfied with *a worſhip adorned with Goſpel-ſimplicity*; but if any muſt have a better, let the children be ſatisfied, rather than bawl and diſturb the family.

But the Doctor would have us conſider further, *How many things muſt be allow'd a favourable Interpretation? how many things muſt be born? how many things muſt be allow'd a favourable conſtruction?* I fear they are *Sans number.* Now if *our Interpretation* might ſtand for *Authentick*, and they would allow us to add *our Interpretation* to *their Text*, this were ſomething. In the mean time, let them be pleaſed to conſider, whether a more favourable Interpretation ought not to be put upon the principles and practiſes of Diſſenters, without wreſting, vexing, torturing them to a ſenſe beyond, and againſt their intentions? And further may it pleaſe them to conſider, whether a more favourable Interpretation ought not to be put upon their own Conſtitutions: for it cannot be expected that any ſhould interpret them favourably, if they themſelves interpret them rigidly: And the execution of Laws and Canons will tell us what conſtruction they put upon them that beſt underſtand 'em. It cannot be hidden what an Interpretation has been made of the Statute againſt *Popiſh Recuſants*, to torment poor Proteſtants, who are brought within the *laſh* of it, though out of the *Reaſon* of it. And laſtly,

laſtly, we humbly deſire it may be a little better conſidered, that the Impoſed matters are in *their* judgments indifferent, in *ours* ſinful, which is like the *Quid ſi?* to an Atheiſt, that can never be anſwered; And ſeeing (as the Doctor ſays) *ſomething will be amiſs either in Doctrine, Diſcipline, Ceremonies or Manners* (he might have added, *or in all*) that they who have the power in their hands, would either rectifie what is amiſs, or however not compel others to comply with what they themſelves confeſs to be ſo.

(3.) He would have us conſider, *How Separation of the people from our Churches comes to be more lawful now, than in the days of our Fathers?* But had it not been more becoming a rational Divine firſt to conſider, *whether it be ſo or no*, before it be conſidered *how it came to be ſo?* Many men are ſo haſty, they leap over the ſtile before they come at it. 1. Then, Separation was as *lawful then*, as 'tis now, had they ſeen with our eyes; and as *unlawful now*, as then, if we ſaw with their eyes, I mean the eyes of Conformiſts; for ſuch are they who are produced againſt us. And what an odd argument is it to quote them for our Fathers, who were their own Grandfathers? 2. It would be conſidered whether the Separation of former times was not much greater than that of the preſent time, for they proceeded to ſet up their *Presbyteries*, their *Synods*, their *Provincial* and *National Aſſemblies*, formed themſelves into ſeparate bodies for Government, and were ſoundly ſmok't for it in the high Commiſſion. 3. And yet if in any reſpect the Separation be greater now than it was then, it is becauſe there are more ſevere terms put upon the Paſtors of Churches; and they being removed from the Benefices, the Flock did not judg that a ſufficient diſcharge from, nor diſſolution of their relation, and therefore adhered to their true and only lawful Paſtor, and by conſequence a Separation followed: Nor were the Miniſters of old haggled off their legs with a quarter of the Oaths, Subſcriptions, Declarations, Renunciations, that now they are; and they that took ſuch care to throw the Paſtors out of Churches, muſt be reſponſible to Chriſt, if the people follow'd them. And in thoſe former days there was much connivence and Indulgence exerciſed towards the Nonconformiſts in ſome obſcure places, where lay no temptation to a *quare Impedit*; but we have mended the matter, as *ſowr Ale does in Summer.*

(4.) Laſtly, He would have us conſider, *The common danger that threatens us all by our diviſions*; which if ſome late Preachers had well conſi-

conſidered, they had never blown up the ſparks of perſecution againſt Proteſtant Diſſenters; we are willing to conſider the *common danger* that threatens *us by our Diviſions*; Are they as willing to conſider and remove the Cauſes of the Diviſions which heighten the common danger? If the danger be *common* to both, why is not the *ſecurity* ſo too? Muſt the Diſſenters only be in danger on all hands? Wiſe men, that can foreſee a *common danger*, ſhould not deſtroy one half of their friends, that the *common enemy* may with more eaſe deſtroy the other. The firſt Conqueſt *Rome* made of *Brittain*, was by this error of the Natives, *Dum ſinguli pugnant omnes vincantur*; and we heartily wiſh that in their next attempt, they proceed not upon the encouragement of the ſame *Maxim*. In which Devaſtation, though all are like enough to ſhare in the *common miſery*, yet their ſhare of the ſin will be the greateſt, that would hazard every thing, rather than part with any thing: that would loſe the Horſe to ſave the Saddle, or perhaps one hair of the Horſes tail. They that are ſuch admirers of *Unity*, and will yeild nothing to procure it; and have ſuch apprehenſions of *Popery*, and yet will do nothing to prevent it, muſt preſume ſtrangely of the ſtrength of their Rhetorick, or think meanly of the weakneſs of our Reaſons, if ever they hope to Proſelyte us into the faith of it. As for *Diſſenters*, how vigilant and active they have been againſt the Deſigns of *Rome*; how Cordially they have eſpouſed the common Engliſh Proteſtant Intereſt, without regard to their private pretenſions; how zealous they have been for His Majeſties Perſon, Government and Intereſt, let others ſpeak, we ſhall be ſilent.

SECT. XIII.

The Doctors Pacquet of Advices, Adviſed upon; with ſome humble Advice to himſelf and others. The Concluſion.

THE *Advice* to thoſe in Communion with the Church, was ſhort and ſweet, but the Diſſenters ſhall now have it by *Wincheſter* meaſure.

§. 1. And firſt we are adviſed, *Not to give encouragement to raſh and intemperate zeal.* We thankfully take his advice, and humbly return our own; *Not to give encouragement to raſh and intemperate Railing*; whe-

whether he *gave*, or his *ſucceſſor* took without his giving, any encouragement, to let fly at *Meroz*, to vomit up a whole Pulpitful of Gall, we muſt not determine; but if the *quatuor tempora*, four times a year, or ſo, would ſerve their turn to revile us, we could be content; but this intemperate railing grows very tedious. That *Gregory Nazianzen* ſeldom ſaw *any good end of Councils*, we eaſily believe, and have therefore the leſs hope of *Convocations*; for my part, I obſerved nothing more in the Nation, than an univerſal tendency to mutual love and forbearance, till that of late ſome fearing we ſhould be too happy, beat up the *Pulpit-drums* to awaken drowſie perſecution.

§. 2. He adviſes us *not to be always complaining of our hardſhips and perſecutions*. That's, I confeſs, ſomewhat a hard chapter, to be *always forced*, and *never allow'd* to complain: Let them either take away *the cauſe of Complaint*, or our *ſenſe of the Cauſe*; and we ſhall either not need the advice, or quickly take it. To vent inward griefs in outward expreſſions, is ſome little relief to an oppreſſed heart, that muſt either breathe or break: but thus paſſionate Mothers ſometimes whip the child till it cryes, and then whip it for crying: which a blunt great man once expreſt in more ſlovenly phraſe; To beat a Dog till he ſtinks, and then beat him for ſtinking: which had never offended the Readers ears, if the Doctor comparing the Separators to *Dogs*, p. 7,8. had not warranted the Decency of the expreſſion.

Nor yet do we *always* complain of our hardſhips, nor with uncivil reflexions, nor at all of *our Prince*, in whom we might be compleatly happy, if ſome Inſinuators did not intercept his Royal Propenſities to Grace and Mercy.

How eaſie is it for them that are at eaſe, to read Lectures of patience to thoſe in miſery! thus we adviſe the poor ſick patient to patience, and gravely reprove his ſighs and groanings. *Omnes Conſilium facilè ægrotis damus.* And thus the keepers of the *Inquiſition* pity their wretched priſoners; telling them they do ill to complain of their hard fare, ſince a ſpare diet is more for the health of them that want air and exerciſe: thus did *Julian* anſwer the complaints of the *Chriſtians*, That he had taken away nothing from them, but what was *a hindrance to their ſpiritual race*; and now they might more eaſily thruſt in at the narrow gate, when he had ſtript them of the worlds cumber: but to pinch us, and then command us not to feel, is to chew the bullet, that the wound may be more incurable, the anguiſh more intolerable. We will not ſay with *Job*, chap. 16. v. 4. *If your ſoul*

were

were in our ſouls ſtead we could heap up words againſt you; but this we may, that ſeeing he will neither allow us to *lay down* our burthens, nor *complain* of them, we will allow our ſelves to complain of our ſins, and when we are diſcharg'd of thoſe, we ſhall bear other loads the better.

§. 3. We have this *Advice*, *Not to condemn others for what we our ſelves have practiſed, and think to be lawful.* 'Tis good counſel. Nor do we remember that ever we perſecuted our brethren for *non-compliance with our inventions*; nor, that we know of, did we ever ſilence two thouſand Miniſters at one clap for ſcrupling our modes of worſhip. The heats and animoſities of Brethren ought to be bewailed, not imitated; and though they have not ſilenced each other for trifles, yet the wiſe God to take down their ſtomacks has choſen they ſhould ſuffer by others hands and not their own.

But the Doctor turns his *Advice* into *Accuſation*, and draws up a Charge againſt the ſeveral ſorts of Diſſenters from *their own practices.*

(1) And firſt he muſt be ſuppoſed to begin with the *Presbyterians: Who contend even at this day for the obligation of a Covenant, which binds men to endeavour after uniformity in Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Worſhip.* I will add the words following,——*according to the word of God, and the example of the beſt Reformed Churches.* And will they condemn the Doctor for ſuch a Covenant? *Uniformity* they *plead for*; and *Uniformity* they *plead againſt*, and yet without any ſhew of contradiction; for it's another Uniformity they plead for, than that they plead againſt. If *T. G.* had adviſed the Doctor *not to condemn the* Papiſts *for what he himſelf practiſes*; not to condemn them for worſhipping God, when he worſhips the ſame God; his anſwer had been ready: we worſhip, and you worſhip the *ſame God*, but not with the *ſame worſhip.* And ſo from his own anſwer he might have anſwer'd himſelf. The great rule we own is this: *In neceſſariis unitas, in Adiaphoris libertas, in utriſq; charitas.* Let *unity* (and if you will *Uniformity*) be kept in *neceſſaries*; in *non-neceſſaries*, *liberty*; in both, *charity.*

(2) The *Independents* muſt have a touch too, for their ſeverity in *New England*, where, as he ſays, *They made it no leſs than* baniſhment *for the Anabaptiſts to ſet up other Churches among them:* That is, they baniſht them to their own homes in *Old England*; we deſire we may ſuffer no worſe baniſhment here. But yet the news is very bad if it be true; but we ſuſpect all ſtories from thence ever ſince the great *Archdeacon* licenſed the Legend of one Mr. *Baxter* baptized in his own blood by the *Anabaptiſts*

Baptiſts there, for which his Doctorſhip came upon the ſtool of repentance; but ſuppoſing the information true, he muſt firſt weigh all the circumſtances of it, before he can juſtly condemn them, and then ſhow that we have practiſed the ſame thing we condemn in others.

(3) He has a fling at the *Quakers* too: *Who notwithſtanding the ſingle independency of every mans light within, have found it neceſſary to make rules and orders among themſelves to govern their ſocieties, to which they expect an uniform obedience, and allow no liberty out of the Power and the Truth.* And let them *expect it*, ſo long as they do not *exact it:* I am confident thoſe perſons will not condemn the Clergy for their *higheſt expectations*, if they would forbear their *rigid exactions.* I ſee then plainly ſome mens dealings are harder than their arguments: *Uniformity* may be good; who impoſes it, is not much conſiderable, all the controverſie lyes, what the matter of which it muſt conſiſt, what the rules by which it muſt be enjoined, ought to be.

§. 4. His next advice is, *Not to inflame the peoples heats by making their differences with the Church of* England *to appear greater than they are.* They that complain of other mens heats, ought to cool their own; but thus the *Torrid Zone* may ſend a Pacquet of Advice to the *Temperate, not to inflame the peoples heats.* They *that make the differences*, not they that *make 'em appear*, are the dividers; nor have we made 'em appear greater than they are, though ſome have made 'em greater than they need be: If we preach this Doctrine to the people, *that the Pariſh-Churches are true Churches*, they will never believe us, ſo long as they believe the *Doctor*, *That one Church, one Altar, one Baptiſtry, and one Biſhop* (in his ſenſe) were of the ſame extent and latitude; and all the reſt but *Occaſional Meetings*, pag. 27. and if we ſhould preach to them, that if *Occaſional Communion be lawful, conſtant communion will be a duty*, they would but laugh at us, and perhaps we ſhould ſmile a little at our ſelves: That the Diſſenters have (as the Doctor ſays) *ſome little intereſts of their own*, is very true; little, very little intereſts they are, but if he will thence conclude, they *prefer 'em before the honour of Chriſt, and the peace of the Church*, he may give proof of his great *underſtanding*, but not his conſcience. In the mean time the Doctor might have done well to ſuſpect his own *great intereſts* in the world, before he had reflected on their *little ones.*

§. 5. Another branch of his Advice, is, *Not to harbor, or foment unreaſonable jealouſies in peoples minds concerning us:* i. e. *That we are not hearty and ſincere in the Proteſtant Cauſe.* To this I only ſay, I ſhall never hereafter entertain one thought that the Church of *England* is *marching towards Popery*; for ſince I read this Sermon, and the definition of the *Church of England* therein, I deſpair of ever knowing who or what the *Church of England* is. Pope *Pius* the fifth uſed to ſay, when he was a *Biſhop*, he was *pretty ſure*, when a *Cardinal* he *began to doubt*, but when *Pope he abſolutely deſpaired of his ſalvation.* I have ſometimes thought it *eaſie*, of late I found it *hard*, but now I ſee it *impoſſible* to underſtand this ſecret. As for his advice we do thankfully accept it, and ſhall not *harbour or foment one unreaſonable*, if they will be ſure not to give in *reaſonable ſuſpicions* of their inclinations that way. And we do humbly intreat them to give us no more grounds for our jealouſies than they needs muſt; for if they do, though we may be ſo modeſt as not to *foment* them in others, it will be difficult *not to harbour* them in our ſelves. For if whilſt they cry out we are all undone for want of *unity*, they continue the *impediments* which obſtruct it; and when they thunder againſt *ſeparation*, they continue *the cauſe of it:* If they ſpeak hard words againſt Popery, and give harder blows to Proteſtancy both at home and abroad; or if whilſt they give the *Papiſts* a gentle fillip, they reach diſſenting Proteſtants a ſound rap; if they will ſtill proceed to repreſent all but themſelves as ſilly in their Principles, ſeditious in their practiſes, and diſloyal in their deſigns; we may perhaps perſwade the people to ſay little, but they will pay it with thinking.

§. 6. Laſtly, He concludes with this Advice, *Not to run the hazard of all for a ſhew of greater liberty to our ſelves.* This advice may be wholſome for ought we know, and we may take it when we underſtand it. At preſent we know not what we have worth the keeping, if our Conſciences be once loſt. If he intends we ſhould not hazard *ſubſtances* for *ſhews*, we ſhall hearken as far as we may; but if he means we ſhould not be wrought upon by the *Papiſts* to petition or endeavour a *general Toleration*, his advice is already taken, and ſo becomes our praiſe: we have not done it, we ſhall not do it, though their continued provocations and perſecutions tempt us daily to it; and ſome are ready to ſay, What matters it by whom we are undone, if we muſt be undone? but

but it's very wonderful that wise men can yet see no difference between a little *moderation*, and *universal toleration*; nor can distinguish between the toleration of *Idolatry*, and forbearing *two or three Ceremonies*. An *universal Toleration* (says the Doctor) *is like the Trojan horse which brings in our enemies without being seen*. It was well rymed however, because Toleration of Popery will bring in our enemies *most visibly*. No! it's secret connivence, under hand encouragement, that brings 'em in, in Masquerade, which open toleration would bring in bare-faced and naked. The Doctor is afraid lest *by setting their gates wide enough open to let in all their friends, they should bring in their enemies*. Such are the wise Notions that Kirk-statesmen have in their heads, to shut out their friends for fear of letting in their enemies, when they can come in κεκλεισμένων τῶν θυρῶν, and can pick the locks of *Oaths, Tests, Subscriptions*, by a *Papal dispensation*. Let then the Gates be well watcht, the horses belly well searcht, the *Doli fabricator Ulysses*, the great Engineer of the Intrigue well examined, and old Father *Sinon* not suffered to equivocate with good King *Priam*,

Trojaq; adhuc stabit, Priamiq; arx alta manebit?

As I abhor cruelty towards all men upon the sole account of Religion, so shall I never plead for Indulgence to any, who discredit Religion with such practices, or mix it with such Principles as disturb Government, and destroy the ends of all society; the Magistrate is the Peace-keeper, and is intrusted by God to suppress and punish the violaters of it. Nor do I fear what advantage the *Romanists* would get upon us by that *Connivence* which they enjoy, if their Temporal hopes from a worldly interest were less, and their fears of being brought to condign punishment for their Treasons were greater; and they might have been past the hopes of the one, and the fear of the other, if some of our Clergy-men had not *unseasonably* (and some say *unreasonably*) insisted upon certain Imaginary priviledges to the obstructing of the Justice of the Nation. But if *folly* be such a catching disease, the only antidote will be to teach 'em more *wisdom*. If *boldness in Religion*, give our enemies advantage, let not *prudent zeal* be discouraged. If *contentions* will do 'em such great service, remove their causes, by following the Rule, not as the Dr. has warp't it, but as the *Apostle* left it, to *walk by the Canon of the Word so far as we have attained; and if any man be otherwise minded*, to leave him to Gods instruction, and wait till he shall reveal his mind farther unto him.

The Concluſion.

THus have I at length rub'd through the *Reverend* Authors Diſcourſe; and upon a Calm Reflexion on my work, do not think I can diſpleaſe any one more than my ſelf: Such is the common fate of eager Diſputants, that whilſt they would reach a knock at their *Antagoniſts*, they loſe their blow, and wound themſelves: ſo eaſie it is, while we are *ſcribling*, to forget that we are *dying*; and that our *Sand* runs faſter than our *Ink*: If the late change of *Ink-horns*, into *Inck-glaſſes*, had but taught us how *frail* and *brittle* we all are, it had been the moſt *innocent ſignificant Ceremony* that ever was invented. I could wiſh there were a *General Auditors Office* erected, to take the Account, what all Diſputes amount to, and 'tis probable the *Total* would be this, That the Contenders have loſt more, than ever their Readers gained. Thus zealous Gameſters win and loſe awhile, till at laſt the *Box* gets the ſtakes, and its well if the unconcerned by-ſtanders come off ſavers: And yet when we condemn, and ſeem to bewail our wranglings, we go on, and wrangle ſtill, like little children that ſcratch and bite, and cry together: But the Diſſenters have one Plea, That in theſe *Piracies* they are not the *Aggreſſors*, but ſtand purely on their juſt Defence: If the *Winds* could be quiet, the *Waves* would not tumultuate; but poor *Neptune* bears the blame of all the *Mutinies* in his Kingdom, when *Æolus* only is guilty of the diſorder. If their Oppoſers could

could hold their *hands*, the Diſſenters would eaſily rule their *tongues* and *pens*, and would ſilently ſuffer ſilent perſecution: That which goes to the quick, is this, That men cannot be content to ſhoot their *keen arrows*, except they poyſon them with *bitter words*; like the Serpent that pierces with his teeth, and infuſes his venom along with his biting. It is far more eaſie to pluck up the Flood-gates, than having once done it, to ſhut 'em down again. We have ſeen the beginning of a Controverſie, which may perhaps outlive our Funerals, and the next age may lament thoſe wounds which the preſent has got, but ſleeps it out, and feels not. But if we *muſt*, or *will* reciprocate this *Saw of Contention*, what need to go down to the *Philiſtins* to ſharpen the *Polemical Cutlaſs*, when we have *a file* at home will give it too much keenneſs. I owe the Reader and my ſelf this debt of Juſtice, to profeſs, That I have not to my knowledg gratified any baſe luſt in this my Anſwer; I have ſteered by the compaſs of Truth, and have not vered willingly from it, though perhaps I have not always made the point I aimed at. I muſt further profeſs, That I have thoſe awful thoughts of the *Reverend Doctor*, whoſe Tract I pretend to Anſwer, that he has equalled moſt, and excelled many of thoſe Worthies, who have maintained the Proteſtant Cauſe againſt inſulting *Rome*; but in this Cauſe he has gone below himſelf, and many others, which I do not impute to any want of Controverſial skill, but the intrinſick weakneſs of the Cauſe he defended, and the real ſtrength of that he oppugned; and ſeeing further than others into the true ſtate of the Controverſie, he diſcerned the feebleſs of other mens Arguments; but yet through the iniquity of the matter,

could

could find out none better of his own. And laſtly, I muſt openly profeſs, after all I can hear, or read againſt the Cauſe of Nonconformity, I am more confirm'd, that all the wit of man can never prove the Diſſenters in their way of worſhip guilty of *the Miſchiefs of Separation*, nor juſtifie the exacters of ſuch terms of Communion as are *no way* commanded by the word of God, *no way* neceſſary to the executing of thoſe Commands; but they muſt remain ſtill guilty of *the Miſchief of theſe Impoſitions.*

FINIS.